

# NAG

NEW AGE GAMING MAGAZINE

PC | Xbox | GameCube | PlayStation | GBA

New Anime Section | Writers Wanted! | Pikmin  
Shade: Wrath of Angels | SW: Rogue Squadron II  
Highland Warriors | UFO: Aftermath | Will Rock  
C&C: Generals | Arx Fatalis | Prisoner of War



Unreal 2K3 Level  
Building Tutorial  
Don't Miss Part 1

win



Lazy Gamer's  
Guide to...



## THE LORD OF THE RINGS™ THE TWO TOWERS



## the LORD OF THE RINGS™ — THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING™ —



If your Cover CD is missing pull down your  
pants and do the hotdog dance...

[www.prophecy.co.za](http://www.prophecy.co.za)

January 2003 | Volume 6 Issue 10  
SA Edition

**R 35.00** (Incl.)



9 771028 053002

# Life's a game



# Nintendo®

GAMING 24:7™



To win one of ten Game Boy Advance  
call 082 285 1000 NOW!

Competition closes 16 December 2002.



## Nintendo GameCube

Nintendo is all about fun! Nintendo GameCube was designed to perform just one task - to play video games providing the best gaming experience.

- over 100 games by Christmas.
- exclusive games and characters.
- the only dedicated games console on the market.
- connectivity to Game Boy Advance.
- portable complete with built-in carry handle!



GAMING  
24:7

GAME BOY ADVANCE™



**SOLTEK®**  
Mainboards

# Dual DDR

**SERIAL ATA RAID FSB333/266**



**SL-75FRN-R**

**NVIDIA nForce2 SPP + MCP**

**Socket A**

- > FSB 333/266MHz > Supports Dual Channel DDR400/333/266 > Expansion Slots: 5 x PCI, 1 x AGP8X/4X
- > Serial ATA RAID Controller > 6 x USB2.0/1.1 Ports > Supports UATA 133/100/66
- > 6-Channel AC'97 Audio > BIOS Vcore Setting > BIOS FSB Setting > BIOS AGP & DIMM Voltage Setting
- > Supports 2 x UATA-133, 1 x UATA-133 RAID > Serial ATA RAID > ABSII > H/W Monitor

## Limited Edition

Soltek eye-catching hand bags  
Only available with Soltek mainboards now!



## VGA GeForce4 Ti4200



## Intel 845GE+ICH4

**SL-85MR3-R**

**Socket 478**



- > FSB 533/400MHz
- > Supports DDR333/266 SDRAM
- > Integrated Intel(R) Extreme Graphics
- > Expansion Slots: 6 x PCI, 1 x AGP4X
- > Serial ATA RAID Controller
- > 6 x USB2.0/1.1 Ports
- > 6-Channel AC'97 Audio
- > BIOS Vcore Setting
- > BIOS FSB Setting
- > BIOS AGP & DIMM Voltage Setting
- > Supports 2 x UATA-100, 1 x UATA-133 RAID
- > Serial ATA RAID
- > Support Hyper Threading Function (CPU 3.06 G up & windows XP only)

## Intel 845PE+ICH4

**SL-85DR3**

**Socket 478**



- > FSB 533/400 MHz
- > Supports DDR333/266 SDRAM
- > Expansion Slots: 6xPCI, 1xAGP4X
- > 6xUSB2.0/1.1Ports
- > Supports Ultra ATA133/100
- > On-Board 6 channel AC '97 Audio
- > Support SL-02KIT (Option)
- > BIOS FSB Setting
- > BIOS Vcore Setting
- > BIOS AGP & DIMM Voltage Setting
- > HW Monitor
- > Support Hyper Threading Function (CPU 3.06 G up & windows XP only)

## VIA KT400+VT8235

**SL-KT400-R**

**Socket A**



- > FSB 333/266MHz
- > Supports DDR400/333/266
- > Expansion Slots: 6 x PCI, 1 AGP8X/4X
- > Serial ATA RAID Controller
- > 6 x USB2.0/1.1 Ports
- > 6-Channel AC'97 Audio
- > BIOS Vcore Setting
- > BIOS FSB Setting
- > BIOS AGP & DIMM Voltage Setting
- > Supports 2 x UATA-133, 1 x UATA-133 RAID
- > ABSII
- > Serial ATA RAID

**TVR**  
COMPUTERS cc

TVR Computers cc are authorised distributors of  
Soltek products in South Africa

For more information please contact  
TVR Computers on Johannesburg (011) 807-1390,  
Cape Town (021) 555-0891 or Durban (031) 263-0371  
[www.tvr.co.za](http://www.tvr.co.za)



**Genius** 

# Your Image Solution of Choice

**Genius**



ColorPage - Vivid 4



ColorPage - HR6X Slim



ColorPage - HR7X Slim



ColorPage - Vivid 3XE

**TVR**  
COMPUTERS cc  
trading as Genius South Africa

TVR Computers cc are the sole distributors  
of Genius products in Southern Africa

For more information please contact  
TVR Computers on Johannesburg (011) 807-1390,  
Cape Town (021) 555-0891 or Durban (031) 263-0371  
[www.tvr.co.za](http://www.tvr.co.za)

# C O N T E N T S



Ed's Note	8
Domain of The_Basilisk	10
Freelander	11
Inbox	12
Role Playing	14
Anime	16
Competition: Graphics Card	21
Community.co.za	22
PC News	26
Console News	30
Technology News	34
The Awards	58
Subscriptions	69
Competition: Sim City 4	72
Competition: Add-Ons	73
The Web	94
Leisure Reviews - Music & DVDs	96
Send Off	98

## REGULARS

GeForce FX	86
Case Modding in South Africa	87
Logitech Freedom 2.4 Joystick	88
Logitech MX700 Mouse	88
Creative PC-Cam 750	89
Kalliba Removable USB Flash	89
BenQ V991 19" Monitor	90
BenQ P221 21" Monitor	90
Shock 2 "Spiderman" Controller	91
Extreme 3D System	91

## HARDWARE

## FEATURES

Lazy Gamer's Guide: Nintendo	18
Unreal Tournament 2003: Level Editing	92

## PREVIEWS

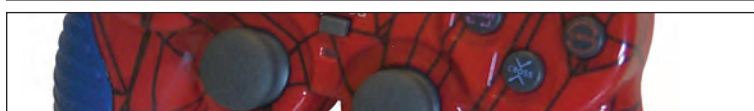
Command & Conquer: Generals	38
Will Rock	40
Shade: Wrath of Angels	42
Xtreme Air Racing	46
UFO: Aftermath	48
Highland Warriors	50
Specnaz: Project Wolf	53
Platoon	54
Devastation	56

## PC REVIEWS

Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	60
Arx Fatalis	62
Prisoner of War	64
NASCAR Thunder 2003	66
The Gladiators	67
Far West	68
Europa 1400	70
Cultures 2: Gates of Asgard	71
Archangel	72
K-Hawk: Survival Instinct	73

## CONSOLE REVIEWS

Lord of the Rings: Two Towers (PS2)	74
Pikmin (GCN)	76
Rogue Leader (GCN)	80
Warioland 4 (GBA)	82



**This month's cover:** The two Lord of the Rings titles tussle for cover space - read the reviews to find the winner.

# BenQ

Inspired by Acer



Specialising in digital lifestyle devices



www.tvr.co.za

TV2

# January NAG Cover CD

## DEMOS

FIFA 2003	17.5 MB
PacBomber V1.2	2 MB
Rainbow Six: Raven Shield	155 MB
Rollercoaster Tycoon 2	69 MB
Zoo Tycoon: Marine Mania	83.5 MB

## MOVIES

Devil May Cry 2	3 MB
Gothic 2	4 MB
Hannibal	15 MB
S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Oblivion Lost	40 MB
Starfleet Command III	29 MB

## PATCHES

Age of Mythology V1.01	2 MB
Battlefield 1942 v1.2 Patch (European)	22 MB
Grand Prix 4 Patch v9.0	5 MB
No One Lives Forever 2 v1.2 Patch	14 MB
Tribes 2 Re-release Update v25026 - v25034	49 MB

## MODIFICATIONS - ADD ONS

Battlefield 1942 Merciless	16 MB
Morrowind - The Armor of the Magi	3 MB
No One Lives Forever 2 Map Pack 1	32 MB
Stronghold Crusader Bonus Characters	9 MB
The New Race Mod v1.0	43.5 MB
UT2K3 Skin Pack	4 MB
UT2K3 TTM Mutator	.5 MB
Zoo Tycoon Add ons	4 MB

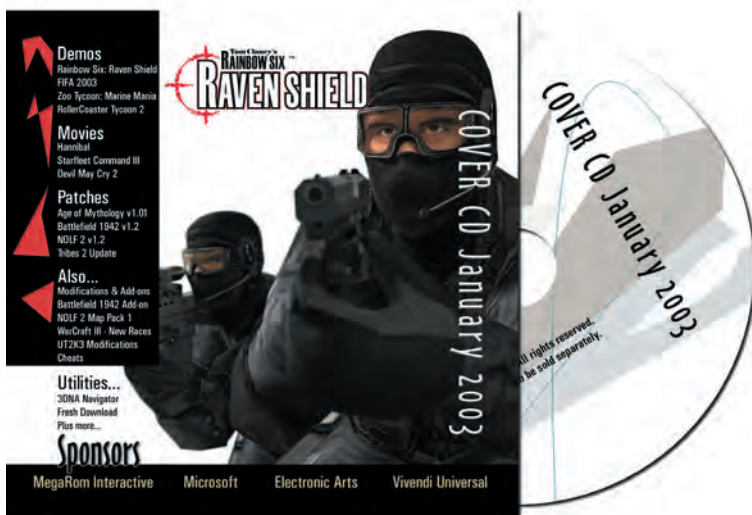
## UTILITIES

d3DNA BaseStation	19 MB
Doozler	2 MB
Fresh Download	1 MB
Snivel	.5 MB
WinZip 8.1	1 MB
WinRar 300	1 MB

## CHEATS

Cheatbook Database 2002 v2.0	5 MB
August Update	1 MB
September Update	1 MB
October Update	1 MB
November Update	1 MB

Estimated Total: 656 MB



*We would like to thank  
the following companies  
for making the NAG  
Cover CD possible...*



**MegaRom**  
Interactive

**Microsoft®**

**VIVENDI  
UNIVERSAL  
INTERACTIVE PUBLISHING**

*We love you long time!*

WELCOME  
BACK

## The old

Reading the heading you have to wonder - welcome back from what exactly, a holiday, a period of alternate

events, a change from the normal humdrum of everyday existence? As I write this I'm preparing to go away, I should be excited, anticipating the fun in the sun, getting my tan back on track, doing a little bodyboarding (not boogie-boarding as I was told by an ex-banana boy from KZN) and just taking it easy. The problem is that I'm not looking forward to this holiday because, and this might sound a little odd, I've been putting a number of things off over this year of deadlines and misery, denying myself the little pleasures, storing up a list of things to do over December that I've been wanting to do the whole year. (Bear with me) So this then is a retrospective look at the last year - this was my Christmas list [other than the usual slew of books, electronic gear, gadgets and the odd DVD - and probably a pair of socks from someone who doesn't know me very well]:

Dear Santa, I want to continue playing and finish Dungeon Siege; I want to spend a ridiculous amount of time playing Battlefield 1942 online; I want to immerse myself in Earth and Beyond for days on end; I want to clean up my hard drive once and for all; I want to fiddle with some new movie making hardware and software; I want to play with our new Nintendo console; I want to sort out the hardware cupboard and throw away everything that wasn't made in 2002; I want to get back into a good flight simulator; I want to fiddle with some new graphic plug-ins; I want to do a little Unreal Tournament level editing; I want to play a few games of chess online; I want to play and finish Diablo II [only got into the second section]; I want to experiment with different capture cards so I can improve the way our console screenshots look; I want to start experimenting with Flash and I also want to learn how to animate really well in 3D Studio. These are just a few examples. I know as I sit here I'll probably end up doing only one, if I'm lucky two of the above listed items and then those two things will probably be the more sensible options. What I'd give to just be able to play Dungeon Siege, create levels for it, play them until I'm so sick of it I burn the actual CD.

The point: I wonder, is it just me or would everyone else rather spend good quality time [occasionally, during a holiday] with their computer instead of splashing in a

shark infested ocean, fighting for parking at the malls and beach, rushing at the airports to make connecting flights to another country just to sit at another airport for six hours, put up with tens of thousands of miserable people standing in queues to buy presents for people just because they have to...? It's not a very tough decision this year. If you have a perspective on this I should know about, even if it's a professional opinion, send to this address: letters@nag.co.za.

## The new

On a lighter note, 2003 is going to be different for everyone... especially for us and our readers, as you can all see the size of the magazine went up but the price didn't. So in a way that was our Christmas present to you lot. I originally wanted to bag a 3D card with the magazine but the glue arrived late so we couldn't do that... pity, maybe next year.

Anyway, there is much that is going to change this year, and all for the better, keep reading NAG as we try our best to give you what you want, save you money and keep you entertained. Remember everyday in this industry we are creating culture, what that culture is depends on everyone who has ever built a level, drawn a character, or even just debated the merits of the latest FPS on the scene.

It's a great industry to work in and this year things are going to get much better as we turn our passion into reality each month by banging out this magazine.

Enjoy the issue.  
**Michael James**  
Editor

## The obscure

Here's something that cracked a smile in the office this issue, it's from a book that lists a number of words and their definitions that have, over the years, fallen out of general circulation.

Here is one such word I found while browsing through the definitions - "**Pxilated** Led astray, as if by pixies; confused, bewildered, intoxicated" - from the *Word Museum*.

## CAPTION OF THE MONTH

Come up with a funny caption for the image below and send it to [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za) - subject: **January Caption**. If you use the wrong subject in your e-mail it'll just get deleted...

The prize each month is a mystery - sometimes it might be a collection of belly button fluff or even a small jar of toe jam, other times it might be a new gaming rig\*

\* Usually the body matter



I knew I should have waited for the right moment before flushing the toilet - Robert Brazier

## november winner



## Winners

## Unreal Tournament 2003 Game

Franchrich Kraamwinkler  
J.E. Donaldson  
Rowen Nortjé  
Kyle Dent  
Gustave E. Leibbrant

## Unreal Tournament T-Shirts

Frank Tonjes  
Tyrone Hammergreen  
Neil Bisschoff  
Mike Mullany  
Mark Wilson

EDITOR: **Michael James** | [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za) | [083] 409 8220

SALES MANAGER: **Len Nery** | [sales@nag.co.za](mailto:sales@nag.co.za) | [082] 594 9909

MARKETING & SALES ASSISTANT: **Lauren Das Neves**

DESIGN & LAYOUT: **Walter Pretorius**

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT:  
09h00 - 15h00 [strictly!]

P O Box 237 | Olivedale | 2158 | [subs@nag.co.za](mailto:subs@nag.co.za)  
Tel 011 704 2701 | Fax 011 704 2948

CONTRIBUTORS: Adam Liebman | Alex Jelagin | Anton Lines  
Derek dela Fuente | James Francis  
Jarred Krombein | Leonard Diamond  
Ronald De Does | Ryan Niksch

COVER CD INTERFACE & DESIGN: - **Shane Williams**

PUBLISHER: **Replay ITV Media (PTY) LTD**

PRINTING: **Print Ability** | 011 257 8580

DISTRIBUTION: **DNA Linx**

INTERNET: **[www.prophecy.co.za](http://www.prophecy.co.za)**

WEBMASTERS: James Francis | Errol Enslin  
Ziv Unger

Copyright © 2003. All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.

## Editor's Choice Around the World



The GIGABYTE MAYA II R9700 Pro Graphics Accelerator with ATI RADEON 9700 Pro chipset will take you to a brand-new visual world

# MAYA II

## RADEON 9700 PRO

# GIGABYTE MAYA II

# NEW VGA EMPIRE

### GIGABYTE MAYA II R9700 Pro Graphics Accelerator

The GIGABYTE MAYA II R9700 Pro Graphics Accelerator with ATI RADEON 9700 Pro chipset will take you to a brand-new visual world

- New Generation of visual power - GIGABYTE MAYA II R9700 Pro
- The cutting edge on GIGABYTE MAYA II R9700 Pro
- How to get a perfect graphics accelerator?
- GIGABYTE MAYA II originates a visual revolution
- The profile of ATI RADEON 9700 Pro chipset

**GIGABYTE TECHNOLOGY**

POWERED BY **ATI RADEON 9700 PRO**

[www.gigabyte.com.tw](http://www.gigabyte.com.tw)



## R9700 Pro Revolutionary Performance

- Powered by RADEON™ 9700 Pro Visual Processing Unit (VPU)
- Super bandwidth AGP 8X graphic interface
- Engine core 325MHz
- First to fully support DirectX® 9.0
- First 8-pixel pipeline architecture
- All new 256-bit memory interface
- First to use pixel shaders to accelerate video
- 128MB DDR memory accelerates the latest 3D games
- DVI-I and TV-Out connector supported



## R9000 Pro

- Powered by ATI RADEON™ 9000 PRO with 64MB DDR SDRAM
- Engine core 275MHz
- SMARTSHADER™ technology fully supports DirectX® 8.1
- Sharper-looking 3D graphics with ATI SMOOTHVIEW™ technology
- Dual display support with HYDRAVISION™
- Featuring ATI CATALYST™ - Industry-leading software suite
- DVI-I and TV-Out supported



## RADEON 7500 AR64D-H

- Powered by the ATI RADEON™ 7500 Graphic Engine
- 64MB, 4ns 4Mx16 SDRAM
- Core Clock = 270MHz, Memory Clock = 230MHz
- Advanced Feedback Cooling System
- Support V-Tuner H/W monitor and O/C Utility
- Support DVI-I and TV-Out Function
- 2-View Function Enable
- 6 Games Bundled



\* These speed settings are not guaranteed by GIGABYTE  
— The specification and product are subject to change without notice.  
— All trademarks and logos are the properties of their respective holders.  
— Any overclocking is at user's risk. GigaByte Technology shall not be responsible for any damage or instability to your processor, motherboard, or any other components.

For more information, please call our distributors:



Johannesburg  
Tel: +27 11 2031000  
Fax: +27 11 2031100

Cape Town  
Tel: +27 21 5557111  
Fax: +27 21 5557117

Durban  
Tel: +27 31 5718888  
Fax: +27 31 5718866

Port Elizabeth  
Tel: +27 41 3638088  
Fax: +27 41 3631888

Bloemfontein  
Tel: +27 51 4300000  
Fax: +27 51 4601144

Upgrade Your Life™ [www.gigabyte.com.tw](http://www.gigabyte.com.tw)

**GIGABYTE™**  
TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCHERS HAVE LIKENED THE EXPERIENCE OF READING

# THE DOMAIN OF THE BASILISK

to having ninety-two simultaneous orgasms or being directly connected to a four-million-watt power supply. Of these three experiences, one is impossible and another will kill you. The remaining one, however, you can have every month for the nominal cost of a magazine. Ain't life grand?

## The Console Conspiracy

**Before I launch myself into this article and get every console gamer in the country ready to send anthrax to my house in a little brown envelope, I would like you all to know that I actually started gaming on consoles way back when I was a little kid. It's the same old story everyone's heard a thousand times.**

My mother one day brought home an Atari someone had lent her (I was the kind of kid who disassembled old kitchen appliances for fun, so she reckoned I might enjoy this new electronic gadget). Needless to say, I didn't eat, sleep or take a bath until we had to return it. I was about four years old and the game was Space Invaders. Only shortly after that, did I get into computer gaming. Insisting we borrow it again, I played the Atari as much as I could. Of course, the reason for its popularity with me was the fact that it was my first gaming experience. Unlike other retro fanatics, I don't believe Pacman is a better game than anything being released today (with the exception of Task Force Dagger...). It was great because it was a new concept. However, the fact remains that at the time console gaming was just as viable, if not more so than PC gaming. The games were fairly similar on both platforms (that is, the console had the same range of titles that the PC had), and all of them were at least fun.

A little while on, the release of the Nintendo 8-bit console and the beloved Mario Brothers made me a very happy child. The games for that console were varied, challenging and innovative. Not to mention affordable. If you were not privileged to own a computer (at the time, an XT was a machine to be proud of), and gaming was your pleasure, the console provided a very reasonable alternative. Not long after that, Sega arrived on the scene in a big way with their Genesis / Mega Drive console. It boasted a 16-bit processor and arcade-quality graphics. (Again, for its time, this was a major achievement). Lead by Sonic the Hedgehog (in my opinion the best platform scroller ever made), Sega took a large portion of the gaming market. Nintendo answered with the Super-Nintendo, also 16-bit, and the two battled it out for popularity. The Super-Nintendo saw more Mario's and what some people consider to be the best Final Fantasy games in the series. On both of these consoles, almost all of the

games were highly playable and relatively cheap. At about this time, however, computers were starting to pick up the pace as well, and were becoming more and more suitable for home use. Word processors, spreadsheets, graphics applications, etc, gave the PC far more depth than the consoles, because they were not limited to gaming. The only problem is they were still a lot more expensive, and for the gaming enthusiast, there was no pressing reason to buy a computer (unless you were a Kings Quest fan). Consoles still rightfully owned the gaming market. Things were going great for console gaming, and then along came



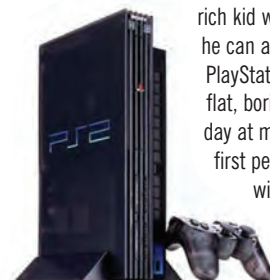
the PlayStation, and everything went to pot. The PlayStation was a revolution in console gaming technology, but it started the process of degradation that was to happen in the following years. This happened for a number of reasons. 1. Game prices shot through the roof while the cost of PC games remained roughly the same. The cost of the console itself was scary as well, in comparison to the amounts we paid for the earlier generation machines. This made buying a PC all the more viable, as you got limitless extra capabilities. Computers were becoming more and more prevalent in society, and the console was suddenly not worth its weight purely as a gaming platform. 2. The console offered very little scope for multiplayer gaming, the best you were most likely to get was an annoying split-screen. Online gaming on computers was taking off at a speedy pace, not to mention the emergence of the "LAN society". 3. The technology, while a break-through for consoles, was quickly surpassed by the PC, and so console graphics (especially resolution) became outdated fast. 4. Crash Bandicoot was one of the most pointless, stupid games ever made, and seemed to set the tone for most of the console games in the future. Soon all you could find was racing, fighting and bad platform games. The glory days of Mario and Sonic were gone. Games like first person shooters, strategy, adventure and role playing games were almost non-existent. The only redeeming factor for the PlayStation was that three Final Fantasy

games were made for it. (In case you have not noticed, I worship Final Fantasy). Other than that, there was no point to buying a console unless you were a complete idiot. The fact that enough idiots bought it to keep Sony in business astounds me every time I think about it. Anything remotely worth playing was ported to the PC anyway.



Not so much in South Africa, but in the rest of the world there were the alternatives of the Nintendo 64 and the Sega Dreamcast. Nintendo retained some of the former enjoyment we got out of consoles, and was much more reasonably priced. However, both companies followed in Sony's footsteps soon enough and became a waste of electricity.

Why, oh why does anyone waste their time on a console these days? I did manage to make a few people see the light with my article on Counter-Strike a few months back, and I'm hoping to do the same now. Especially in this country, what is the point unless you're a complete rich kid who just wants to show off that he can afford the ridiculously overpriced PlayStation 2? The games are generally flat, boring and have a playable life of a day at most. It is moronic to try and play first person shooters or strategy games with a joystick, just as it is stupid



to even want to play Tekken 4. It's the same freaking game as its three predecessors. Wake up and smell the Quake 3. The PS2 has a DVD

player, sure, but if you are a DVD movie enthusiast you'll want a proper player with all of the features included, not some second rate gimmick on a console. It's much cheaper to just get a DVD drive for your computer anyway.

I think the only hope for consoles is to drop the price to a reasonable amount; equip them with a keyboard and mouse for the more complicated games; make those more complicated (and more entertaining) games available for the console; provide access to the internet, IRC, and online gaming; give them an ethernet network port for LAN play; release non-gaming applications for them such as word processors and accounting packages; and make printers, scanners and other peripherals compatible with the consoles. Yes, that would be the ultimate console. Wait, it's called a PC.

Read Below

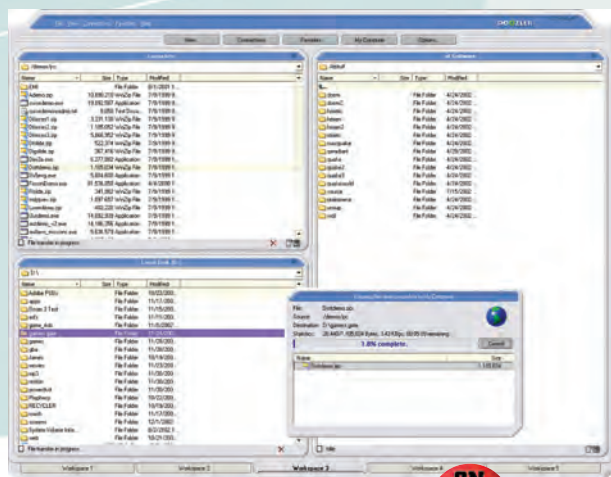
Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this article and for that matter any further article in the future or the very near present may in no way whatsoever be construed to be further more based on the opinions of the persons writing the articles in question or any other arrangement of words or phrases in such a manner as to indicate that opinions expressed may or may not be those same opinions expressed in this article.

# more free stuff than you can shake a stick at...

## Doozler

*FTP like you've never had it before*

There are a few sides to the Internet. One is browsing the web. Others include chat rooms and browsing newsgroups, not to mention the vast domain of E-Mail. But it's surprising how few users actually use, or know of, FTP. The File Transfer Protocol is the sister to the HTTP protocol, which runs the World Wide Web. While you can download and upload files via HTTP, it's not as fast as FTP. And if you don't know of the uses of FTP servers, you are missing out on a lot. The biggest problem has always been that FTP programs are rather intimidating. There have been great options, though, such as the user-friendly CuteFTP, but most people seem to settle for a download manager such as GetRight to do their downloading for them. Or they rather go through a web interface to upload their personal site than to learn a FTP app. Doozler is another option in the user-friendly FTP-client race to catch your attention. Sadly it's not free, but it's worth a look, and the demo allows for 30 days to try it out. Created by the company who make the powerful, but technical WS-FTP, Doozler is much more appealing to general surfers, and far better looking than its older cousin. Jumping into the current trend of skinning, the program allows for different skins to change its look. But the real reason to use it is how straight-forward it is.



You have four panes in the program, in which you can open multiple documents at a time. This workspace approach is very convenient, especially if you are working over multiple sites, or doing downloads from various sources. It's not a new concept, and it would be hard to get people to change from their current clients. But if you haven't found one yet, or you find the world of FTP daunting, Doozler might just be what you need.



## Space Snivel

*Freak out passer-by's* Space Snivel is a fast, and very cool, screensaver that resembles a rotating, er, snivel in space. What precisely is a Snivel, anyway? Well, it's something resembling a croissant, except it is wobbly, and it floats in space.

The screensaver also shows the

code of the app running down the side, though it's unlikely that it is the actual code as it's being run, but it's a cool effect. The whole scene is finally completed by a space background that also bops and weaves in the background.

It's very impressive, were it not for the registration notice that pops up every now and then to annoy you. Registering is free, but you'll need to mail the developer for it. Once you have the registration code, the annoying and un-appealing message disappears for good, and you can look at your Space Snivel in peace. Or if you get tired of the Snivel, turn it off, and look at the code instead. And while you're at it, browse Nevosoft's other shareware and free apps at [www.nevosoft.com](http://www.nevosoft.com)

## To Fill

*Get Greedy*

To Fill is a shareware puzzler with a very simple principle - to take up as much space on the gameboard as possible. You do this by matching colours. For example, your first block borders a red and a yellow block. Choose to change your block to yellow, and you gain the yellow. Then you choose red, and the two yellows become red, adding the red block to your collection. There are eight colours, and the wider your field, the more of these colours touch your collection. The trick is to take up as many new blocks as possible in each turn.

In the other corner is the PC, doing the same thing - taking up blocks by changing its collection colour. So it becomes a battle of wits and co-ordination as you try and pace ahead by taking more blocks than the PC. This is much tougher than it seems,

## on the cd

ON THE CD

We added a few extra utilities you might want on the CD. Apart from the usual latest drivers and patches, you can also grab the following:

### Winzip 8.1

The leading compression program in the world should be a permanent installation on your system.

### WinRAR 3.0

The one problem with RAR is that new compressions don't work with the older programs, so it's best to keep your version up to date.

### FreshDownload

This month's download manager of choice is Fresh Download, a free download manager that speeds up your file downloads and keeps the connections stable, as well as resumes broken downloads.

and very addictive. If anything, it's not mindless and while most games, especially the standard card games on Windows, tend to become routine after a while, the variation in To Fill is too big to start repeating itself anytime soon. The program is shareware, so it allows you to try it out before you decide you want to pay for it or not.

## 3DNA Base

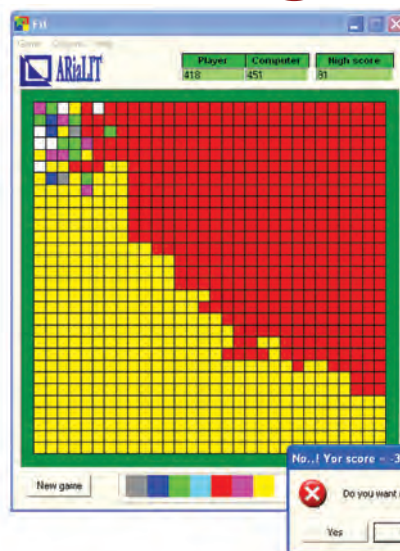
*Windows in 3D...*

So, are 3D interfaces the future of the world? Though there have been a few novel attempts so far, not yet. We're still a way off from being Tom Cruise and fanning through our files with fancy gloves and translucent screens. We're also quite a way away from the novel interfaces on every second 'tech crime' TV show, where hackers operate in colourful 3D environments. But if you are curious on what's being developed in this realm, then install 3DNA and feel the slow rush of current 3D desktop technology.

ON THE CD

The interface leaves a lot to be desired still, but you can install other environments to make your life easier.

Sadly there isn't a lot you can do with this current piece of software, except float around in it, click on the options hanging on the walls, and mess around with the 3D toys that are scattered around the floor. Of course, you could be mischievous and install it on your friend's PC. The program is fairly easy to exit and uninstall, but he might get a bit confused when his desktop is the inside of a space station.



# leTter of The momenT

Well done to the letter of the month winner - your Electronic Arts game and T-shirt will arrive shortly.



## Science of Computers in Gaming

While building a new PC recently, I started thinking about what might exist five or ten years from now, specifically focusing on speed intensive components such as the CPUs and video accelerators. Now if you consider that almost every device in a PC seems to have or need a fan these days, in the future, when these components become faster and faster generating more and more heat there will be a need for faster and faster fans. In fact some of the fans you can buy these days clock speeds in excess of 6000 rpm (revolutions per minute). Now, does that mean we may see some kind of helicopter effect in the future due to increased rpm or some Boeing like engineered PC's in terms of cooling?

**Not stated**

**Ed:** Actually the shape of the fan blades is all wrong, not to mention the pitch - they just attack the air all wrong. Increasing the speed or power of the fan without changing the angle of attack of the blades will give you more air flow but no lift and again all this is highly dependant on the shape of the fan blade itself. All those helicopter flight simulator propeller heads can relax - I have nothing more than a slight grasp of these concepts. Anyhow, back to the point, the day a PC takes off due to an overly active fan is the day I'll eat my power supply, cables included [but not plugged in]. You get the letter of the moment because you made us stop working and start laughing. Please send me your proper contact details or I'll feed your prize to my dogs.

## short sTuff

### Caption of the Month Winner

I just bought the new NAG yesterday and saw I won the caption of the month... don't you need my postage details or something?

**Loki (Maelstrom)**

**Ed:** Do you really want a piece of old mouldy cheese?

### Stupid Computer

Sometimes when I turn my computer on it does not detect my CD ROM, I don't have a clue what to do, could you help me?

**Unknown**

**Ed:** It sounds like there is something wrong with your CD ROM drive... I hope this helps.

## Gamers the ultimate beings

Gamers - the most mighty and powerful beings of this earth. We bravely enter worlds unknown to common man. Some are heroes others are villains but ultimately we are all beings of a higher power. For eons we have dodged rockets, performed unimaginable acrobatic feats, fought in wars, commanded huge indescribable armies, took on the terrifying minions of the underworld, eliminated the world's worst terrorist factions, challenged Liberty City's finest law-makers, started gang wars and flew through the air in slow motion. Yet ordinary people don't seem to realise that the majority of the time we're willingly saving their wretched little lives and at the same time lead ordinary lives. It's high time we come out of our dark and stuffy lairs and tell the ignorant world of our death-defying deeds!

**Nogs**

**Ed:** Somehow I don't think coming out of your dark and stuffy lair is going to go as well as you imagine and always remember... there are three fowls in valour.

## Gaming essence

In response to both a letter in the October issue and your idea of putting on a new score of 'Gaming Essence', I heartily agree on both matters. I cannot take the time to pounce out a whole address-the-senate speech to prove my point. Rather I want to do this by example. In the one corner we have previously mentioned titles like Quake III and Unreal Tournament. And in the other we have games like GTA III and Duke Nukem Manhattan Project. Now I know very well that everybody's tastes are different on this. For me however, the pinnacle of gaming essence is the GTA series, the original Command & Conquer, even games like the original NFS. I still play it on my 486 which I keep for that explicit purpose because EA lost it completely with the continued versions of the franchise (waiting on Hot Pursuit 2). This is in contrast as I personally get quite bored and run over by the likes of Quake

III and other 'tournament' style games. Don't get me wrong, I very much enjoy a good fire fight once in a while. But it gets sour if you have too much of it. And I always return to the 'classics', even though it was released last month. That is what gaming essence is to me. It is like listening to all the music out there on MP3, but you go out and buy the CD's of your favourite few bands.

**Serve**

**Ed:** You can read the Hot Pursuit 2 review in the last issue. This gaming essence concept seems to be very person particular - I expect everyone will have firm favourites or their own idea of what it symbolises. I personally don't think gaming essence refers to the idea of nostalgic gaming but rather current titles that can do no wrong and strike a cord with the majority of gamers - GTA for a current example and the original Tomb Raider as a past example.

## Piracy in SA

The other day I was tempted to buy a pirated copy of UT2003. The prospect was very appealing because an original copy costs around R400 and the pirate copy only costs R150 - the pirate vendor in question also had quite a selection including Soldier of Fortune 2, WarCraft III and many more. I asked the vendor whether or not he knew that it was illegal to sell pirated software. His reply was, "Yes, of course I do, and in fact just the other day some of Sony's henchmen came and confiscated all my pirated PlayStation games but the funny thing is that they left all my pirated PC games." The Sony "henchmen" apparently didn't do anything about

the PC games because PC games aren't their problem. My question is simply this, how can piracy be fought if nobody works together? I think this is a very serious problem that should be resolved quickly or else we will be jeopardizing the future of gaming in South Africa. Luckily I overcame evil and bought an original copy of UT2003 and let me tell you, it was worth every cent!

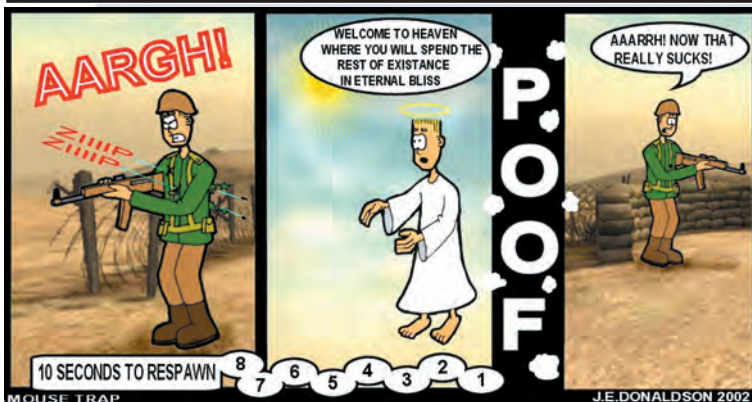
**Malice**

**Ed:** There are many legal issues surrounding the searching for and subsequent seizure of pirated goods and unfortunately many of the laws that protect honest law abiding citizens also protect the criminals. We're going to be talking to a few of these 'henchmen' next year and we'll try and put together an article that details the more delicate intricacies of fighting piracy. But also remember it's not only the pirate vendors who are to blame here - it's all the people who support them that perpetuate the problem.

## What too much Quake does to you

The way of the future: My vision blurs as I stare at the computer monitor. The clear and crisp collections of once definable pixels disappear into a cloudy haze. I stare, and my mind drifts into unconscious awareness. For once, I sit content, roaming among the unknown. All feelings of sadness and anguish seem to trickle away, slowly, and my mind is left afresh with no thought at all. The white, blue, grey and black mingle and dance on this glowing canvas, spinning with their binary counterparts. Everything seems in its place. Gradually, the blur bends and twists and stretches, distorting the

Another comic by J. E. Donaldson



distorted. I gaze in absolute fascination as it glides over nothing, as it weaves and tears through what I see but cannot perceive. An ever expanding place rests before me, flexing its colourful limbs to my blurred satisfaction. It sways and dives, enjoying the new found freedom which my mind has granted it. My subdued mind traces its hypnotising movements, its exuberant manoeuvres. The entities swirl and splash with exuberance, darting with playful intentions. Pulsing with excitement, they move faster and faster, becoming part of whatever they meet. I watch in delight as they race each other, moving through this electrified dreamland in which I am now merely a visitor. My heart seems to sink as I feel them pulse and spiral out of control. Their movements leave an ever increasing stream of abstract colours and shapes, of things which I have never even imagined. Rebounding off things no longer visible, off things non-existent, they move in furious paths of which not even they have control. I can feel them, and they can feel me. With a distant throb, they meet in the centre and explode in a flash of luminescence. My heart is racing, and I feel every muscle twitch and seize with tension. Sounds begin to come from afar, and are faint and unrecognisable. My

dreamland begins to take physical shape in familiar form, and my mind awakens. The dots of light which once danced around the screen now fall into recognisable existence, and I slowly draw my dazed head away from this glowing radiance.

I awaken to familiarity. My friends are working on their computers. I gaze around in amazement, and realise that these number-crunching machines are the way of the future, of my future.

Ian S

**Ed:** The other side of gaming.

### Quake at the movies

Okay, here we sit with a new trend flying about our heads like a stoned

gargoyle. When a good movie comes out, why is there a sudden rush to get the license to make a game out of it if the only outcome is going to be a shoddy one? The Sum of All Fears, for example, was not exactly what I would spend my money on if given another chance. Anyone remember that awful game Spawn? No justice done for what was a rather enjoyable movie in my opinion. Why do developers even waste the money on making games out of movies? Wouldn't it be cheaper to come up with ideas by themselves? Pretty soon, we might see prices of games (which have, amazingly enough, been able to remain stable for years) skyrocketing because of increased

production costs due to licensing. Companies venturing into making games out of movies should go for one (if not both) of two things - adherence to the movie's plot or making the game fun. Why are these simple basics often ignored!? Why then are all the great games out there not based on movies? Quake for example. Not a shoddy actor or bad voice acting in sight. Why are these games better? Two reasons, I believe. The developers do not have the reassuring thought that because the movie did well, people will automatically buy their game. This might make them work extra hard at a title instead of relying on hype to sell their game. The second reason is that when a person watches a movie and then goes on to play the game, the player is expecting a specific

thing, and is therefore easily disappointed. My view is that movies and games should stay the hell away from each other. But then again, I used to think PlayStation ports were a bad idea, and here I am playing a PlayStation port. Maybe the movie to game thing just needs a little time. Let's give it a chance... and if it doesn't deliver then we can all rip it apart!

Psyaniide

**Ed:** The problem with movie to game conversions is the awkward force fitting of one medium into another. Perhaps developers should work with the original movie material in different ways - a good example of this was the game, The Thing; here the developers continued the game where the movie ended - all they needed to get right was the location, premise and general concept and from there they were free to create. Another idea is to perhaps place a time limit on the conversion process from movie to game [a year or 2], this way it'll take the harsh comparative edge away from the whole process and perhaps the goal should be to appeal to your nostalgic remembrance of a movie instead of trying to recreate the experience verbatim.

## Other Things

### Masacres [massacres, Ed]

Sorry about me [my, Ed] spelling but I have an important point to make. All these high school killings that happen in America are all blamed on computer games, but the truth is it is the computers that start it, and our sick society we live in. All these people that go on these killing sprees are bullied as they are "geeks", "nerds", and other names. Then they start getting traumatized and start losing there [their, Ed] minds and then they decide to kill themselves but decide to kill the people that have done this to them. So then after all the deaths, the police find that he had Quake installed and the lawsuits start all over again.

Soulraider

**Ed:** I'm guessing you typed this in a rush?

### Dishwasher game

That idea that 'Pandemic' had about a dishwasher game is not too bad. Of course it may only appeal to a limited audience but so did Pac Man which was quite a successful concept and often simple concepts ('Worms') can end up being popular games. No cyber women turn me on. I turn computers on (with the power button that is).

Yudi

**Ed:** Deep stuff. I think it's safe to file the dishwasher game idea in the recycle bin.

NAG Robot by Roarke Nelson



The NAG alley by Henry



If you're reading this block of information you're one of those rare and precious readers that read the magazine from cover to cover. The reason that we put this nonsense in these little blocks is to get more people like you reading these small boxes. So far it seems as if you're the only person who actually reads this stuff. This now brings us to interesting and tricky territory, should we continue for just one person or give it up and print a proper magazine?

**Remember:** letters are clicked on at least once before deletion.  
**Important:** Include all your details when mailing us or you won't get a prize if your letter is chosen as random winner of the month.

Send all topical and otherwise interesting items to the following: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158 (if you must use ink, paper, an envelope and stamps please include an electronic copy for easy processing) :o  
**Real mail to:** letters@nag.co.za...

There is a new rule for those of you sending in any artwork for publication - your submission must include the NAG logo or one of our magazine covers [download @ [www.prophecy.co.za](http://www.prophecy.co.za)] built into the image somewhere - and by 'built in' we mean not pasted or stuck on somewhere - built in - you real artists will know what we're talking about - no logo / cover - no fame.

# the power of paper and pencil

We have, particularly lately, been inundated with games that are called Role-Playing Games.

These include titles like Baldur's Gate, Icewind Dale, Pool of Radiance, and many more. But these games owe their creation to something else entirely - not computers, or developers or anything you might associate with electronic entertainment. As a matter of fact, the roots of these games go back far further than the common, garden variety PC - right back to the advent of paper and pencil Role-Playing Games in the seventies.

We have decided to show you another world, an alternative kind of game that has been around for longer than many of our readers... the world of original Role-Playing.

So what sets a pencil and paper Role Playing Game (let's call them RPGs for short) apart from a computer based Role-Playing Game (or CRPG)? The main answer to this question lies in the way that the games are played. With a CRPG, the player is given a set of options within a certain paradigm, and follows a story that, while not necessarily linear, is largely predetermined. And, of course, is played on a computer. An RPG is played by a group of people, largely verbally but also with the use of written information and dice. In this kind of game, the player has no set options - the only limitations on the game are those imposed by the setting of the game, be it fantasy, gothic horror, science fiction, or whatever. The action is entirely in the character's imagination, instead of spoon fed information that one would expect from a CRPG. What characters, places and events look like is limited purely by the imagination of each player. So how exactly does it all work, and what's the point? A typical game group is made up of four to six players and a Game Master. Each player controls a character central to the tale being "created" during the game session, while the Game Master, or GM, is responsible for everything else: the people the player's

characters (PCs) might encounter, the environment, the weather and just about everything else. The GM basically sets the groundwork for the story, giving the players situations and challenges. The story is fleshed out by the way that the players control their PCs.

As said before, the game is restricted only by the player's imagination.

However, RPGs do have rules to make play fair. It is another duty of the GM to make sure that these rules are adhered to, and to act as an impartial referee within the game. The most important point to realise here is that there is no way to "win" an RPG. Each player can set personal goals for achievement targets, but games themselves can potentially be never-ending. Also, we must remember that these games are co-operative, not competitive. The players and GM work together to create the story, a pursuit which can be incredibly rewarding... not to mention highly effective escapist entertainment. The next time you need something to do, why not try out some traditional RPG gaming? Get some friends together and prepare for an experience unlike any you have ever had before!

## review

PC titles like Baldur's Gate, Icewind Dale, Pool of Radiance and Neverwinter Nights all have their basis in the grand-daddy of the RPG gaming market, Dungeons & Dragons. First appearing in the Seventies, Dungeons & Dragons was the brain child of Gary G. Gygax. Through the years it has grown and evolved, becoming the most recent package - Dungeons & Dragons 3rd Edition.

This latest printing of the Dungeons & Dragons (or D&D, as it is known) has seen some rather severe rule changes... in fact, the rule basis of the game has completely changed with this printing, turning the game into a smoother, simpler and ultimately more playable rule system.

D&D 3rd Edition has what can only be described as a "generic" fantasy setting. Any form of fantasy setting can be used by the GM. The game even comes with optional rules for fire-arms and similar concepts, which do not fit into the every day concept of fantasy.

The core rules of the game are made up of three books, namely the Player's Handbook, the Dungeon Master's Guide, and the Monster Manual. These three books, along with a set or two of standard RPG dice, are all you will need to play the game, but there are other books written all the time which deal with a host of rules variations and setting ideas. One such setting, which will be very familiar to fans of PC based D&D titles, is the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting, which is comprised of one essential hard cover book and several soft cover add-on titles.

This latest reprint of the D&D rules shows a big advancement in the world's most popular RPG. Not only have the rules been improved, but the overall quality of the product has been given a boost, with high grade paper, attractive covers and brilliant artwork inside. The rules are well-written and easy to come to grips with. And a versatile GM will be able to use D&D 3rd Edition for many different campaigns - the only restriction is imagination!

If you have never role played around a table before, then this is the best place to start. D&D 3rd Edition is a malleable and forgiving rule system, and the Forgotten Realms Setting provides the players and GM with all the information they need for many years of good role playing.

Dungeons & Dragons 3rd Edition is an RPG that every role player should have, or at least play!

### REVIEWED BY

Walt "Shryke" Pretorius

#### PLUS

Great rule system  
Versatile  
Easy to learn

#### MINUS

Three books needed

**SUPPLIED BY:** Outer Limits (011) 482-3771  
**PRICE:** R 420.00 average  
**INTERNET:** [www.outerlimits.co.za](http://www.outerlimits.co.za)



## lots of pretty dice

One of the most important pieces of equipment a role player needs is a good set of dice. Certain games use specific dice, while others use a whole array. There are even games that don't use dice at all! It's a good idea to have at least two complete dice sets, especially if you are going to be playing different games. A full set of dice is made up of seven different dice. These are a four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, two ten-sided, a twelve sided and twenty sided die, each of which fulfil specific functions, according to the game that is played.

A huge variety of dice colours, styles and even shapes are available - the ones pictured here are a regular shape, with a new colour style. The reason why RPGs use dice is simple: there are certain things within the game that need to be determined by chance. Your character may have the ability to perform repairs on computers at a level of 50%. That means you would have a fifty-fifty chance of success. To make the situation, a dice roll would be made, and the story would progress according to the result.

In a way, the GM and players are not the only people who collaborate on creating a tale during a role playing session - Lady Luck also has a say in things, at least when the dice need to be consulted!



# innovative technology performance design

## Cordless Freedom



### Logitech Cordless Freedom Joystick

Experience the freedom and eliminate the clutter. This revolutionary cordless joystick uses Logitech's 2.4 GHz Cordless Freedom technology to deliver reliable, lag-free performance. The innovative design features an aluminium trigger and throttle and a heavy rubber base.

Distributed by



Available from



you can at



# 100% Otaku the NaG Anime paGe

Anime is a pastime that many gamers (and indeed "regular" people) have been enjoying for years, but still it does not fall into the category of mainstream entertainment.

There are a lot of misconceptions about anime and the terms surrounding it, which I intend to set straight.

Anime (correctly pronounced "uh-ni-meh") is a word derived from "animation" and refers to a specific style of animation developed in Japan. Some common features include characters with large eyes and heads, and/or spiky hair; rich, vivid colour in the drawing; "still action" shots where the subject remains still while the background moves rapidly; and the occasional change in drawing style to one of absurd, cute simplicity. Not all anime is like this, and pioneers in the industry often try completely new things. I believe Anime is defined more in the atmosphere and emotion of the production, but the stylized artwork still plays a large role. Essentially, anime can be any animation produced in Japan.

## A Brief History of Anime

The foundations of anime were laid in 1917 with several one to five minute long cartoons produced by individual filmmakers interested in animation as a hobby. Most were retellings of traditional folktales. During the 1920's, nothing much changed apart from the length of the cartoons. From the 1930's onwards, the traditional stories gave way to Western-style humour, and became increasingly affected by the rising state of militarism in Japan. When Japan invaded China in 1937, it was impossible to release any entertainment without it being approved by the censorship boards. This resulted in a flood of military propaganda in the disguise of art, which extended well into the second World War. In 1943, the government declared it was time for Japan to produce its first full-length animation feature. Called, Momotaro's Gods-Blessed Sea Warriors, it told the story of the Japanese Navy (portrayed as cute animals) battling against the allied forces (portrayed as devils). However, it was released in 1945, just as the war ended, and was rather contrary to the actual events. Anime began to mature and develop to a large extent after World War II. The first full colour animation appeared in 1955 and the first professionally distributed feature came in 1958, entitled Hakuja Den (The White Snake Enchantress). However, many regard the true beginning of anime as we know it to be Testuwan Atom or as it was called in English, Astro



Boy, released in 1963. It was the first internationally successful anime series, and paved the way for everything that has come since then.

## Terminology and Common Mistakes

The most common mistake made by non-anime-connoisseurs (and the mistake which most annoys us true believers) is the confusion of the words "anime" and "manga". The reason for this confusion is a company called Manga Entertainment which has been responsible for bringing several well-known titles such as Ghost in the Shell to the English-speaking world. Manga is the term used to describe Japanese printed comic books, similar to the Spider Mans of the West, which are drawn in the same style as anime. Anime, as I have already explained, is the animation of this drawing style. Another error doing the rounds is the assumption that all anime is the same as hentai. Hentai, for those of you who don't know, is animated pornography. The word "hentai" directly translated means "abnormal" and that gives quite a good indication of what it's all about. It can be good for a laugh if you have a warped sense of humour, but is generally frowned upon by the anime community. There is a less-extreme derivative of hentai, called ecchi, which means lewd anime. This usually entails many panty camera shots and other sexual humour but steers clear of actual nudity or

NaG will be featuring a monthly page on anime, in keeping with our focus on gamers' lifestyle ("otaku" roughly meaning "fanatic"). If the response is favourable, we may extend it to two pages.

by anton lines



sexual acts.

A point I cannot stress enough is that not all anime is about demons and tentacle monsters (well, most hentai is, but that's not the issue). Due to the fact that the sci-fi channel on DSTV plays really, really bad science fiction anime on Saturday nights (with the rare exception of Neon Genesis Evangelion which showed recently), some people have come to believe that that's all there is. Another group of people will have only seen Pokemon or Dragonball Z and therefore dismiss anime as badly-drawn, purile cartoons with low frame rates. That is children's anime, people, it's like comparing Kideo to Fight Club. Finally, you get those who have seen only the very popular titles like Akira and Armitage 3, and think, "oh, that was nice. Moving on..." Now, I am not trying to be condescending to anyone who falls into one of the abovementioned groups. Only trying to open everyone's eyes to the fact that there is a whole industry of anime out there, and it comes in every possible flavour. Anime is a style of artwork, not a genre.

In the coming months, I will be reviewing my favourite anime titles, exposing the burgeoning anime fan to the best stuff out there. There will also be some explanation of more Japanese terms and more background info on the shows.

# Wontid

DO you suffer from low self assteam  
have NO relashinship  
NO life  
NO persinality  
NO ambiishin

expect little compensayshinn  
and are easily exploytibill  
(must rite good english)

If you ahnsid ya to at leest 3 of  
the abuv then u cood...

## ryte 4 NAG

---

NAG is expanding in 2003 and we need a few more freelance writers to fill all those white pages each month. If you have any writing skills and are interested in becoming part of our freelance team please read on... if not, tear out this page and nail it to your local community message board.

These are the people we need [in order of importance top to bottom]:

**Sports reviewers** [must play or have played most types of sports titles]

**Feature writers** [articles must be well researched and should in some way be relevant to gaming]

**Hardware** [some real world experience is essential here i.e. you must have been published elsewhere]

**Console and PC Game Reviewers** [experience will help / must own your own console]

This is how you apply:

Send a 600 word review [game or hardware related] or general gaming article to this address: [ed@nag.co.za](mailto:ed@nag.co.za). Use the subject line: **Freelancer** - or your submission might get missed - besides screwing up on a small detail like this will probably disqualify you anyway. ;) Your 600 words should also not contain any spelling or grammatical errors. We're also interested in your unique writing style and not a carbon copy of any of the current writers.

Only E-mail applications will be accepted, you need full time Internet access to be a NAG writer. You will also need transport so you can collect hardware, games etc. for review (this means that you need to be JHB based).

*Please remember that game reviewers are like reality television shows - in any given week there are too many of them. The point is this - if you can write good quality features you'll eventually end up writing the odd review or two as well.*

# the **LAZY GAMER'S** guide to the **gamecube**

## The Disc

In the tradition of the N64, Nintendo opted for a hard-to-pirate non-standard disc. This compact unit is only 8 cm across, but it can take up to 1.5gb of data. Granted, most DVD discs can take more, but console games rarely get this big, especially with compression technology.



## No DVD

Because of the non-standard disc size, and the lower price, the GameCube can't play DVDs. You can spring for a Panasonic (Matsushita) hybrid, though, but that will set you back three or four times the GCN's pricetag.

## Portability

The GameCube is intended as a gaming machine, so making it portable is a big issue. Not only is it quite small (roughly 150mm x 155mm x 105mm), but the small discs and the convenient handle on the back improve this feature. Third party vendors have already released GameCube carry packs.

## The Specs

Needless to say the GameCube is a pretty powerful unit, leaving Sony's PS2 in the dust, though the Xbox is still the leader. But it's hard to explain just how powerful the integrated hardware is in this little space. Inside the machine you'll find the Gekko, a hybrid of a PowerPC chip. It does 64-bit floating-point calculations, and although it's slower than the Xbox chip, it's a apples/pears comparison in the end, because Gekko could outperform the Xbox PIII hybrid in certain situations. Ati developed the Flipper graphics chip with its own built-in Geometry engine (like the Xbox). It can produce 24-bit colour, and it also has a lot of built-in graphic functions, making development easier on the platform. Factor 5 are responsible for the sound chip that can push out 255 channels, but realistically you can expect 64 3D channels at 48Khz (CD quality), with Dolby 5.1 support.

## Expansion Ports

The GameCube's expansion ports are hidden underneath the unit. You can add a broadband or modem adapter here. They slot in comfortably, and the port alone is visible when the unit is upright. The unit also has a built-in Analog port for standard TVs and a Digital port for progressive and scan-line TVs.



## What's it gonna cost?

A GameCube costs around R2499, and the titles will cost between R450 and R599.

## Memory Card

Except for the Xbox, a memory card is a must for any console you plan to make playing the games worth your while. The GameCube has two flavours - one with 59 blocks and one with 251 blocks. The amount of blocks taken up depends on a game, though. A title such as Doshin the Giant take a greedy 40! A memory card costs around R219 and R349 respectively.



## Controllers

The GameCube can take up to four controllers at a time, allowing for frantic multiplayer action. A lot of GameCube games already feature four-player support, everything from split screen in Wave Racer to the chaotic fun of Super Smash Bros Melee. Of course, you'd have to buy the extra three controllers separately. These cost around R359 each.

### Rumble

The GameCube controller has full Rumble features, standard with any next-gen controller. That means that the device will rattle, shake and vibrate as you get hit, punch something or do something special, depending on what the developers want.

### The Wavebird

The Wavebird is Nintendo's in-house offering for a cordless controller. It will cost you around R699, and it allows you to get as far back as 20 feet (6.096 meters). The downside to the Wavebird is that it has no rumble features, unlike the conventional controller, to conserve battery power. There are third-party controllers that do have rumble support. Apart from that it's a dead-standard controller of which you can plug four into your console.

### The Buttons

Of all the controllers in the next-gen race, the GameCubes' immediately draws attention thanks to its strange buttons. Where other controllers have four same-sized buttons, on the GCN there is a Main button (A), with the X and Y buttons around it. The B button is lower to the side. The A is your main action button, the X and Y tend to do secondary functions, and the red B button is for special uses, such as secondary attacks. There are also two shoulder buttons, and a Z button just off the right shoulder.



### The Analog Sticks

A standard on controllers since the PSX and N64, these have already surpassed the D-Pad. While the PlayStation 2 controller still gives the D-Pad preference, the GameCube and Xbox controllers don't. The first is in the right position for your left thumb, and the other is in reach of your right thumb.

### The D-Pad

The D-Pad is still a feature on the controller, and will be very useful when you start playing GBA games through the newly-released GBA GameCube Player. Most games tend to use the Analog controllers, but the D-Pad still has its uses, if only for navigating menus easily.

### The Grip

The controller is bigger than the PlayStation 2's, but smaller than the one you'd find on the Xbox (the new Xbox controller is roughly the same size, though). Though some will not agree, the GameCube's controller is probably the most comfortable of the three, but this is usually a personal taste.

### Styling!

The controller comes in five colours, just so that you can co-ordinate it with your sofa, TV, pants, dog or strange housemate. You can get them in Indigo, Spice, Platinum, Indigo/Clear and Jet (black). At the moment you can only get Indigo, Indigo/Clear and Jet in South Africa.

# the LAZY GAMER'S guide to the gameboy advance

## Link Cable

The Gameboy Advance can link to the GameCube, acting as a controller. But there's much more to it. Nintendo have taken advantage of the feature, and several of their games allow you to play sections of the titles on both machines. For instance, combine Metroid Prime and Metroid Fusion, and special features and levels get unlocked. A add-on for the GameCube is also being released that allows you to play GBA games on the console.

## Multilink

If you ever spent time with a Gameboy Color, you'd know one of the big appeals were to link two together and play multiplayer. The Gameboy Advance allows for up to four GBAs to be connected and play together. The best is that most games with four player capabilities only need one cartridge between the four of them. A link Cable set will cost you around R19, and it supports 2 players, so you'll need additional sets for more players.

## The Cartridge

Like the units before it, the GBA uses small game cartridges for its storage medium. You can save games directly on a cartridge, so there is no worry about having an additional unit to drag around for save games. The GBA is also backwards compatible with Gameboy Color and Gameboy cartridges.



## Inside the GBA

So what is inside the most successful gaming platform to date? The unit has a 32bit ARM CPU with embedded memory, compared to the GBC's 8-bit processor. It has a 16-bit sound chip, and allows for headphones to be plugged in. The Screen box gives an idea of the graphic capabilities of the GBA, but its safe to say that the performance is at least double that of the Gameboy Color.

## Battery Life

The Gameboy Advance, despite also having a colour LCD screen and being a vastly more powerful unit, can stay going twice as long as the Gameboy Color. On two AA batteries, it can run for 20 hours non-stop. When your battery starts running low, the Power light changes from Green to Red.

## The Buttons

The Gameboy Advance has six buttons and the D-Pad. There are two shoulder buttons, but most of your action will be on the A and B buttons to the right. Then there is the standard Start and Select buttons.



## The Screen

The Gameboy Advance might not be the first handheld with a colour screen, but it's a step up from its predecessors. The unit has a resolution of 240x160 (the GBC did 160x140). It can support up to 65,535 colours (GBC: 32,000 colours), and it can handle 511 simultaneous colours in Character mode, and 32,768 in Bitmap mode (GBC: 56 colours). The only real problem is the lack of decent backlighting, but a future version plans to fix that.

## Sound

The GBA features 16-bit digitized sound - a big step up from the GBC. Though this isn't as advanced as the next-gen systems, it's more than adequate for the games on the unit, which are more or less the equivalent of what appeared on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES).

## What's it gonna cost?

A Gameboy Advance will cost you R1,299. To buy games, the GBA titles cost around R499, depending on the distributor.



# **Competition**

---

# **Win**

# **a Sapphire**

**Radeon 9700 Atlantis Pro Graphics Card**

**Question:**

**Name one of the features of the Radeon 9700 Pro Chipset**

**Entries to reach us by the end of January 2003. Send your answer & personal details to:  
info@sapphiretech.co.za Subject : Sapphire**



**SAPPHIRE**

**Sapphire Technologies Africa**  
**www.sapphiretech.co.za**  
**Tel. 0861 788346**  
**info@sapphiretech.co.za**



## virtual aviation

A new kind of multiplayer game is gaining popularity in South Africa, online and at specially organised LANs. This is virtual aviation, and is a pastime enjoyed by flying enthusiasts across the country. Many of the virtual pilots are pilots in real life as well, but that is certainly not a requirement to play. All you need is a love of flying and some time on your hands. For a while, a lot of people have been wanting to become part of this flying group, but weren't sure how to go about joining. The following information is to make the public aware of virtual aviation, and to help interested people to join.

What does virtual aviation entail? Around the world, there are many virtual airlines. Independent Airlines, African Express, Kwazulu Air and South African Virtual Airlines are based locally. Pilots from this country and others sign up to be a part of these airlines. The virtual world is modelled after the real world, and you can fly your plane anywhere. Indeed, we often get international pilots visiting South African airports from time to time. There are two roles a player can fill in a virtual airline. The first is obviously a pilot. The second, and some would say more demanding position, is that of air traffic controller (ATC). It is up to these players to guide the pilots during take-off and landing so there are no collisions on the runway. At large international airports, things can get rather frenetic for the ATCs as the traffic gets very heavy. At least if they make a mistake, no-one dies.

The player flies using Microsoft's Flight Simulator software. (Microsoft Airlines... this aeroplane has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down...) Most of the pilots use the latest version (2002) but 2000 and 98 are still supported. The third party software which allows the players to network in virtual

airspace works with all versions. Communication is done through internet voice software (Roger Wilco) or just by typing to one another. However, the more serious players insist on using voice, as it is more realistic. The ATCs issue commands to the pilots through voice as well. The lag to the servers is unnoticeable, as a few milliseconds does not make much of a difference while flying. Flying is done in real time or up to 4x normal speed (for players not wishing to make 14-hour trans-atlantic journeys).

The local chapter of the Virtual Aviation Organisation has also formed a LAN group to further their passion for flying. Every weekend, they meet at Swartkops Airforce Base in Pretoria. The group is currently about 30 strong, but on average five to ten will be present at any one of the LANs.

The virtual airlines are always happy to welcome new pilots. There are training programs available for newbies, and the experienced flyers are eager to help out and bring more people into the sport. To start flying, it is recommended you have the following: a computer with internet connection, a copy of Microsoft Flight Simulator, pilot client software (Squawkbox) or ATC client software (Pro Controller), Roger Wilco voice software, a joystick, and a headset (microphone and speakers). Then visit the website of one of the virtual airlines and sign up.



### Websites

[www.ivao.org](http://www.ivao.org) - Virtual Aviation Organisation headquarters  
[www.simclients.com](http://www.simclients.com) - Client software download site  
[www.rogerwilco.com](http://www.rogerwilco.com) - Voice software  
[www.iain.co.za](http://www.iain.co.za) - Independent Airlines  
[www.afex.co.za](http://www.afex.co.za) - African Express Airlines  
[www.kzair.org](http://www.kzair.org) - Kwazulu Airlines

### Independent Airlines

Independent Airlines was started in June 1997 by J.J. Siebert and is a virtual airline that operates via e-mail and the Internet. Their goal is to provide PC simulator pilots with the most realistic flying opportunities available in Africa. Most of the pilots flying for Independent Airlines are based in South Africa, but there are also pilots in Israel, Mozambique, UK and the USA. IA affiliated to the Friends of the South African Air Force Museum stationed at Air Force Base Swartkops during 1998 when the Officer Commanding allocated a building to the Airline which was transformed into a clubhouse. Many enthusiasts who are not on the internet have now joined the Airline and are able to derive pleasure from the hobby and submit their hours via the clubhouse. A Committee was formed during 1998 to run these exhibitions, the mission being "Aviation Awareness" through the use of computer simulated flight. The vision of this committee was formulated as "to see the youth interested in aviation more aware of the science and mystery of flight".



### Kwazulu Air

Kwazulu Air is a non-profit virtual airline based in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa and was founded in February 2000 by Joppie Saayman and Andre Steyn. Their aircraft range from a Cessna 172 to the famous Boeing 747. If you are an inexperienced flight-simmer Kwazulu Air will train you and teach you to fly on a Cessna and see you on your way to getting your Virtual Pilots License.



"Everybody gets something", is the promise we made ourselves and it is what we delivered thanks to Gamers Gate and the generous sponsors of the G8Keeper and Gamers Gate Carousel LAN between the 22nd and 24th of November.

For the youngest gamer during the event (James Hamilton - 7 years old), the last to arrive (Fahrenheit451 - Saturday afternoon), the most improved players in all the official games, all the girl gamers, the best and worst PC case and the trouble makers (Gandalf & Mordin) - prizes were given in appreciation of the dedication to supporting the gaming scene.

I'm sure you know that when friends get together and start gaming, it's entirely different from having a strict regulation of competition type matches, and the evidence was plain. When we experienced the normal minor problems - network glitch or electricity trip - there was no uproar. Thanks to the LG Switches and the Network design by Ph0enix91, pings were under 10 for Counter-Strike most of the time, and the electricity was guarded by BadBoy of Chaos fame, so there was little to complain

about. Whenever there was an issue, everyone either pitched in to sort it out or took the chance to step away from their PC's for a deserved breather.

Fun was had by all - and that's something we'd like to make a habit. G8Keeper wants to take a leadership role to ensure that gaming grows into that and stays that way. We are aiming for bigger and better things and will be joining forces with our friends around South Africa to make the best events accessible and available to everyone.

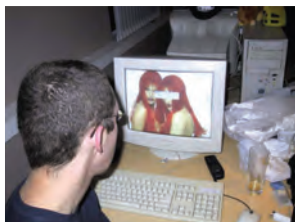
To this end, we've expanded our team too ... Our newest member is Lauryan (Madoosa) de Jongh who joins us to do event marketing and co-ordination as well as public relations. With the addition of Maddie's skills we feel we have rounded off the G8Keeper compliment to a level suitable to handle the next year. The "proof will be in the pudding" for the gamers so to speak.



▼ Why play games

▼ Worcester  
pizzas...

▼ ...are HUGE



I have been harping on the same point over and over with so many people that I feel that I am preaching to the deaf.

A fellow column writer has been knocking Counter-Strike for more than a year now and the people are still playing it. Some of us perceive that a game with good graphics and sound is what it's all about at LANs when the last Carousel event proved everyone so wrong that it made me smile. Sure you had your UT2K3 and Battlefield 1942 there as to be expected from great titles, but the same games are still being played. Quake 3 and Counter-Strike being the oldest games still surviving decently at most LANs while games like WarCraft III Tower Defense, which has been described as "mind numbing", were played to death. Let's not forget Vapour's favorite, Worms (WWP). The LAN was alive with a lot of people shouting and cursing (in a good kind of way) at each other for their loss/win each round. That is what it's all about, having good fun. If you missed the weekend at The Carousel, you would probably NOT like to know that it was the most fun we (everyone who attended) have had playing the widest variety of games you could think of.

Now, because of my Libra nature, I must see the flip side of it all. Guys who do play the "latest and greatest" are bashing people at LANs for not joining in. I see their point too because if something new is out, you would like to try it out before throwing it onto the dump, and having everyone still playing the old games makes it near impossible. I know I have brought up this point before, but it's a double-edged sword. Trying to keep everyone happy is a nightmare.

What happens now is that we are stuck with a problem, do we buy the latest and greatest or not? I am all for buying every good game that comes out on the market and it helps to have a single player campaign handy this time of the year when you are boring yourself at home while you have a spouse/mother looking over your shoulder all the time, telling you its NOT 7PM yet and you can't dial up unless you have gone to dinner with the whole family. Sitting at home with hordes of uninvited family will mean you would probably have to hide from Pete, the most annoying cousin by locking yourself in your room with a few good single player missions. Locking yourself in the office when some family member wants to hear why exactly you play games and asking you what your handicap is, and the handicap you want to create does not involve using golf clubs in the intended way (blame it on Grant Theft Auto, everyone else does). Start saving up guys, I want to see those empty boxes (for show) of games under the tree that reads "From Paul, To: Himself", while you have the CD in your PC, playing. Spoil yourself this year with the games you never have time to play, you deserve it; blame it on the bunny (BUNNIES!!!!!!).

## Counter-Strike Deathmatch Tournament

Recently, the CS community got together and organised a one versus one deathmatch tournament, to see who is South Africa's best player. While many agree playing CS as a 1v1 game is totally different to the team game, and being the "best deathmatch player" will not really prove anything, the results will be interesting if nothing else. 32 players entered the tournament, some relative newcomers and many of the big names. The seeding for the tournament is as follows:

- 1) AiM\*Style
- 2) AiM\*Hellhound
- 3) AiM\*Deathsbane
- 4) B11 Dr4kan
- 5) AiM\*Surge
- 6) B7 De\_stroyer
- 7) [HzO]Clipse
- 8) AiM\*Rocky

The tournament is already underway, but the final stages will take place after this month's publication deadlines, so I'll have the end results for you in the next issue. There have been some major upsets so far. e|Bouncer125 has surprised many by beating second seed Hellhound in the second round, and then going on to beat seventh seed Clipse in the third round. He now plays third seed Deathsbane in the semi-finals. Sixth seed de\_stroyer was also knocked out by lesser known [HzO]Reeper, and Dr4kan (seeded fourth) forfeited his second-round game due to bad sunburn. A matchup to look forward to is the grudge game of DC-Gandalf against AiM\*Rocky. Both players have a certain degree of pride to fight for, although probably neither of them will admit it. Players still in the running are: Style, Gandalf, Rocky, Enemy, Nexus\_Horizon, Surge, Deathsbane and Bouncer125. Good luck to everyone.

mayhem

2003 is here and it seems that you have all survived the holidays.

### LAN LORE:

As we promised here is the first of many Mayhem recipes for LANs. The first is for a small home LAN which most people try and struggle with.

What you will need is the following: Cables, a hub or switch, and a network card in each PC would be a good idea too.

**Step 1:** Setup all the tables, chairs, and PC's around the switch.

**Step 2:** Connect all the PC's to the switch (you will need one cable per PC, if you are using more than one switch you might need a crossover cable to run from the one switch to the other).

**Step 3:** Find the network settings on each PC; most times you can get to these by right clicking on the network neighborhood icon and going to properties.

**Step 4:** Under TCP/IP set the IP address and sub mask. Try something like 100.100.100.1 (Please note that all IP addresses will be the same except for the last digit, i.e. 100.100.100.2, 100.100.100.3 and so on)

**Step 5:** Under IPX go to advanced settings and change the frame type to 802.3 (most people leave it on auto, but make sure that ALL players have the same Frame type).



### DATES TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- 18 January Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 25 January Mayhem Open LAN
  - 8 February Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 22 February Mayhem Open LAN
  - 15 March Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 22 March Mayhem Open LAN
  - 5 April Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 19 April Mayhem Open LAN
  - 17 May Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 31 May Mayhem Open LAN
  - 14 June Mayhem off-line Counter-Strike league.
  - 21 June Mayhem Open LAN
  - 19 July Mayhem Open LAN
  - 26 July Mayhem Open LAN
  - 16 August Mayhem Open LAN
  - 23 August Mayhem Open LAN
  - 13 September Mayhem Open LAN
  - 20 September Mayhem Open LAN
  - 11 October Mayhem Open LAN
  - 18 October Mayhem Open LAN
  - 15 November Mayhem Open LAN
  - 29 November Mayhem Open LAN
- Feeble attempt to take over the world!*

Right love you more and more.

Vapour[SOD]  
vapour@mayhem.co.za



## The management of professional gamers...

This month Gamers Gate speaks with one of South Africa's most respected clan leaders currently involved in competitive gaming, to give us some insight into team management within the spheres of competitive gaming.

**Describe for us a little history and in turn your position and role within No Damn Clan? And add to that your involvement in the gaming industry?**

Five years ago Fuse (Duncan Miller) undertook the task of leading NDC and laid the strongest foundation possible. It is this foundation that has led us to survive the ups and down's of being in a gaming clan. Fuse then immigrated to the UK and handed the reins of NDC over to me, I have been at the helm for 4 years now.

NDC's involvement within the gaming industry is pretty big. The nature of the Internet allows us to interact and compete on a daily basis. Our members are also at the forefront of the development of online gaming in this country, here are a few of our websites:

[www.nodamncan.com](http://www.nodamncan.com) - Our official homepage

[www.gamespace.co.za](http://www.gamespace.co.za) - A popular gaming site controlled and developed by NDC members. Dean Bright aka vatie[NDC], Duncan Miller aka Fuse[NDC] and Jerri Mperdempes aka Rapt[NDC]. This site was voted as top gaming site for the month of November 1999 by New Age Gaming Magazine.

[www.warcraft3.co.za](http://www.warcraft3.co.za) - A website dedicated to news and articles on one of the most popular RTS games run by Vatie[NDC].

All these websites were developed exclusively by NDC members.

In terms of my personal involvement in ZA gaming it has been fairly extensive. It all started off with winning the Mweb Gamer of the Year competition. That was a really cool moment and the prizes were truly awesome. I still have the Creative Blaster PC they gave me. After that, I was made a senior admin on the Mweb games servers for 2 years. Mweb seemed to have canned gaming in ZA so their involvement is no longer running to the extent that they were. I am still Admin on the Gamespace site and also one of the founder members of that site. I am also a co-admin with Carlos Campos (Justae) on our own very popular Forgotten Realms Ultima Online server. Ultima Online in South Africa is probably bigger than any other game played online at the moment!. Hard to believe isn't it?

**What, in your opinion, is the one ingredient that makes up a professional gamer?**

Sponsorship and money? (Laughs)

No seriously, the one ingredient would certainly have to be the same ingredient that any other professional needs: dedication! I have seen average players on a casual level of gaming show some awesome results just by pure dedication to what they are playing towards. With dedication comes the focus and with that

in hand you will win. If you win, surely that elusive company with the vision will sponsor you.

**What strategies in terms of preplanning for a tournament, would you recommend a gamer need do, to achieve the winning edge required of a professional player?**

The most obvious one is practice and more practice. But when it comes down to the crunch of it practice never prepares a player for the biggest neck breaker in serious competition. Mr. Neck breaker goes by the name Big Match Temperament (BMT). It's like this.... You are in the quarterfinals, then what? You are put up against your gaming god and it's like... "OH MY GOD, I'm playing Ph4ntom!!!" Without even going near your PC you have lost that game. BMT management is the single most important preparation for serious competition. The only way a player can be ready is through effective management from other team players, managers and coaches. Yes, believe it or not, coaches and managers do have a role to play. This comes through thorough preparation for your player. The obvious ones are like any other competition, get to know your opponents. Their weaknesses their strengths. Doesn't mean because its just a computer game the same strategies that apply to winning a rugby match don't apply to winning a Quake 3 team death match. Coupled with the above comes the search for experience. Not only locally, but internationally as well. BMT can be managed accordingly with the experience players will get against the big players in whatever game they play.

**How long before we see a South African individual or team taking top honours at either a World Cyber Games or Cyber Athletes Professional League competition?**

HA! It's already happened. Ph4ntom [NDC] came 7th in the world at the World Cyber Games (WCG) held in Korea last month for the Quake 3 competition. I believe that with effective and correct management present at these kinds of events, players like Ph4ntom can win. The mental preparation is paramount at this level. No great players in whatever sport get to the top of their discipline without the correct guidance. The same applies here. I believe that clan DC could have done a lot better at WCG in the Counter-Strike event if they had the correct management present. They simply needed someone to guide them through their strategies.

**Based on your opinion that gamers in SA are on par with the rest of the world in terms of raw talent, where do you think are the main flaws within the various**

### profile

**Jerri, aka Rapt:**  
Clan leader of NDC  
South Africa (No  
Damn Clan)

**Age:**  
Fossil (Laughs)

**Current PC Specs:**  
19" Philips 109S  
GIGABYTE® Intel  
845PE  
Pentium 4 2.4 GIG Intel Northwood socket  
478  
Leadtek GeForce 4 4400 Titanium  
512 MEG RAM 400DDR  
2 x 60 GIG 7200rpm Hard drives  
SoundBlaster Live  
Thanks to Salvo for the modded NDC case!

**Profession:**  
Fisheries Scientist (Len smiles... something's fishy...)

**Hobbies:**  
Surfing and fishing (Like I said, something's fishy...)



**clans in SA and what could they do to rectify them?**

This question ties in well with what I was talking about in the previous question. We have the raw talent. We have it all in South Africa in terms of what it takes for the individuals to win on an international level. There are little flaws in ZA gaming clans I think with regards to what you are asking. Clans however, all have stumble blocks and the main one is the lack of sponsorship from corporate companies. It makes absolutely no sense to me that a company will spend say 20K on marketing a new product for example, without including sponsorship of the very people who can market that product to their core market. So who reads NAG for example? Gamers do! And the gamers are the ones buying the products anyway. So why not sponsor a professional gamer?

Well that's it for this month... I hope articles and interviews such as this one inspire and motivate more of you to enter competitions and become part of the world that is Professional Gaming! Please remember to check out [www.gamergate.co.za](http://www.gamergate.co.za) regularly for ongoing giveaways taking place right now!! Congratulations to last months winner of a Gainward GeForce 4600 Ti 128 meg DDR, sponsored by Gainward and Axiz.

**Len Nery aka Fr33**  
[Len@GamersGate.co.za](mailto:Len@GamersGate.co.za)

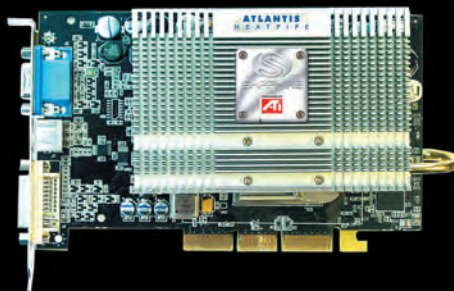
## Clan News

**Four members** of the WCG Damage Control Octane team (Style, Hellhound, Deathsbane and Surge) have left DC to form a new clan called Art in Motion (AiM) with the former leader of Bravado, Rocky. The four previous DC members cited Rocky's leadership ability as their reasons for leaving. Gandalf, leader of DC, has promised to build a new team to take AiM on next year. The players left in Bravado seem to have scattered about. Some have stopped playing Counter-Strike seriously, others have moved to new teams. There will be an update on this situation next month.

# THE ULTIMATE **3D** GAMING EXPERIENCE



## SAPPHIRE ATLANTIS 9700 PRO **ULTIMATE**



VIVO  
TV-OUT  
DVI  
128MB  
DDR MEMORY



Sapphire Technologies Africa Tel: 086 178 8346 or [info@sapphiretech.co.za](mailto:info@sapphiretech.co.za)

**NOLF2 DEATHMATCH COMING**

No One Lives Forever 2 features limited multiplayer functionality in the form of a two-player cooperative mode that resembles the single-player campaign but is tailored for two players working as a team. However, Fox Interactive have announced that the upcoming Version 1.2 patch will not only fix bugs, but will also add the element of deathmatch to the title.

**UT2003 BONUS PACK**

A bonus pack for Unreal Tournament 2003 is on its way from Epic Games and Digital Extremes. New levels and game types are being planned. The levels will be made to look substantially different from previous ones, adding variety to the game. The original Unreal Tournament is still selling well, and this can be partially attributed to the amount of post-release material that was created for it.

**XIII RELEASE DELAYED**

Ubi Soft have postponed the release date of all versions of XIII by half a year to sometime in the third quarter of the year. The delay is due to additional time required to develop platform-specific features, as well as further polishing of the game itself.

**LOTUS CHALLENGE**

Xicat Interactive are at work on Lotus Challenge, a racing game featuring licensed vehicles from the renowned sports car manufacturer. Once released, it will boast the full range of stunning lighting and weather effects. Different race modes will be available, giving players the option between flat-out races and longer, more tactical drives. Lotus Challenge will be appearing on PC and GameCube in March.

**KONAMI'S UPCOMING PC TITLES**

Konami are moving into the PC gaming market with force. Five titles have been announced for release within the next couple of months. Shadow of Memories is an adventure game dealing with time-travel and the implications of temporal tampering. Silent Hill 2: Director's Cut is a psychological thriller, with the upcoming PC version enjoying the addition of a new female lead in addition to the main character. Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance consists of a conversion of Sons of Liberty with the addition of the Snake Tales additional missions and 500 VR missions. Two other titles are in production, this time not conversions of console games. Casino Inc. will be a simulation that entrusts the entire workings of a gambling establishment into the player's hands. Apocalyptica will see players battling it out in arenas using hand-held and projectile weapons and spells. In addition, Konami are also at work on several other, as yet undisclosed, titles for the PC, scheduled for release later in the year.

## Chariots: The First Olympics

Currently in development for PC, Xbox, PlayStation 2 and GameCube is Candella Software's Chariots: The First Olympics. Set in the year 776 BC, this game places the player at the reins of a chariot during the first Olympic games. The game will feature LAN and on-line multiplayer action. No release date has been disclosed.



## IL-2 Sturmovik sequel

Ubi Soft's upcoming IL-2 Sturmovik: The Forgotten Battles, originally to be an expansion pack for the original IL2, is now set to be a full stand-alone game and sequel to its predecessor. It will feature over 40 aircraft, 20 single-player missions and 10 multiplayer missions. Players will also be able to crew bombers with multiple crewmen. The game should be available next month.



## The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Ring



Black Label Games, a studio of Vivendi Universal Games, has announced it has entered into a production agreement with Liquid Entertainment to develop "The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Ring," a real-time strategy (RTS) game for the PC platform. The game will be developed through VU Games' long-term agreement with Tolkien Enterprises to create interactive entertainment based on J.R.R. Tolkien's epic novel "The Lord of the Rings." Expanding on the world of Middle-earth and its inhabitants as introduced by J.R.R. Tolkien, the game allows players to engage in the epic story through both a good and an evil single-player campaign. Players also will be able to play on both sides in an extensive multi-player mode. "The selection of Liquid Entertainment, recognized in the gaming industry for their PC strategy title, 'Battle Realms,' as the developer for 'The War of the Ring' underscores our long-term commitment to creating high-quality titles based on the Tolkien works," said Torrie Dorrell, general manager of Black Label Games. The game will be released in early 2004.



## CSI: Crime Scene Investigation

Ubi Soft has announced that it will publish CSI: Crime Scene Investigation for the PC in March 2003. The game, which will take the form of a first-person adventure, is based on the television series of the same name and will feature likenesses of the entire cast of the show.

Assuming the role of a CSI agent working alongside the rest of the CSI team in Las Vegas, players will be charged with solving five different crimes. To solve the investigations, players will have access to equipment such as finger print dusters, UV lights, and casting kits. Players will also get to interrogate witnesses and suspects.



### THE NEXT WOLFENSTEIN CHAPTER

Previously scheduled as an add-on pack, iD Software's Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory will now be a stand-alone game. It is in development by Splash Damage and Mad Doc Software, with help from Gray Matter Software. Like its predecessor, the game will feature a strong team-work bias in multiplayer (64 players), including a cooperative campaign mode. Enemy Territory is scheduled for completion within the next few months.

### NEVERWINTER NIGHTS COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Bioware recently released the Collector's Edition of Neverwinter Nights in the States. The package includes, of course, the game itself, along with a 120-page collection of artwork, images and sketches, a Sword Coast map and mousepad, a poster of Lady Aribeth and a long-sleeved T-shirt.

### EVEN MORE IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES

Relic have launched the Relic Developer Network, a Web-site dedicated to modders of Relic's games, particularly Impossible Creatures. Seven renowned modders were invited to the launch of the site, and were intensively trained by the developers in the use of the mod tools for Impossible Creatures. The site, <http://www.relic.com/rdn/index.php>, allows you to download tools to facilitate the modification of any aspect of the game, as well as in-depth documentation of the inner workings of the game.

### SAFACT SCORES A POINT

On 1 September 2002, a raid was conducted on the East Rand Traders Square Family Market, resulting in the arrest of Juan Venter, proprietor of Plastic Pizza. He was trading in pirate DVDs, and subsequently to his arrest appeared in the Boksburg Magistrate's Court on 18 November 2002. He was convicted and sentenced to a fine of R5000 or 3 years' imprisonment. This is the first conviction SAFACT (South African Federation Against Copyright Theft) has scored, but it is sure to be followed by many more.

### NEVERWINTER NIGHTS ADD-ONS

Atari, BioWare and FloodGate Entertainment are busy with the first expansion pack for Neverwinter Nights. Titled Neverwinter Nights: Shadows of Undrentide, it expands game-play elements by adding new prestige classes, skills, feats, spells, weapons and monsters, as well as enhancing the Aurora toolkit by adding new tilesets and other design features. Shadows of Undrentide is scheduled for release before the middle of the year. Another expansion pack is scheduled for release a couple of months after Shadows of Undrentide, and will feature even further additions, improvements and enhancements.

**DRIVING BLIND-FOLDED**

Three Master of Arts in Music students at the Utrecht School of Arts in the Netherlands, in conjunction with the Bartimeus Institute for the Blind, have developed a racing game for blind children, called Drive. The vehicle in the game moves along a fixed track, and ambient sound effects are complemented by spoken cues from a co-pilot.

**BLIZZARD CINEMATICS DVD**

Blizzard have released a collection of all their cinematic sequences from Diablo II, StarCraft and WarCraft III on DVD. The package also includes trailers of previous and upcoming titles, Blizzard trivia, concept art, storyboards and director's commentaries. The set is available from Blizzard's online store.

**GANGSTER RTS**

Under development at Spellbound and to be published by Strategy First and Wanadoo, Al Capone will be a real-time strategy game with role-playing elements based on the 1920s' gangster wars. The title is in very early development as yet, and no projected release date has been made public.

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2003**

World Championship Snooker 2003 is in the works, and will be out in Europe within the next couple of months. This addition to the series will have graphics vastly superior to those of its predecessors, but will retain their very impressive physics engine. A new AI system will emulate the varying play styles of various professional snooker players, all of whom have been painstakingly modelled. The game will also offer the opportunity to play 9-ball and 8-ball pool.

**SMASH UP DERBY**

As you read this, Lemon Interactive's Smash Up Derby will start becoming available. The game will plunge players into violent race-meets taking place in a variety of environments. This game will have the most advanced special effects yet seen in a title of this genre.

**AMBROSIA GAMES COMING TO PC**

Ambrosia Software, developers of games for the Apple Mac, will be bringing two of their titles to the PC. The first, Escape Velocity Nova, consists of space trade, ship customisation, 2D combat from an overhead perspective, a non-linear mission structure and a large galaxy to explore. Deimos Rising, the other title, is a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up with arcade gameplay that allows one or two players to blast their way through twelve levels filled with waves of enemies.

## BF 1942 expansion

Electronic Arts will be bringing an expansion pack for Battlefield 1942, titled The Road to Rome, which is under development by Digital Illusions, creators of the game. The add-on will offer numerous new campaigns, eight new vehicles, two new fighting forces and three additional hand-held weapons. No release date has been disclosed.



American McGee of Carbon 6 has begun work on Oz, to be released next year on PC and Xbox. The game will be a prequel to the classic book, and its marketing will be backed up by a range of toys, as well as book and film rights.

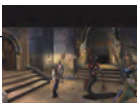


## American McGee's Oz

# International Release Dates

TITLE	GENRE	DATE
Stealth Combat	Action	02-Jan-2003
Impossible Creatures	Strategy	09-Jan-2003
Inquisition	Adventure	14-Jan-2003
SimCity 4	Strategy	14-Jan-2003
Freelancer	Simulator	15-Jan-2003
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Tactical	21-Jan-2003
Highland Warriors	Strategy	28-Jan-2003
Smash Up Derby	Racing	28-Jan-2003
Gothic II	RPG	31-Jan-2003
Darkfall	MMORPG	01-Feb-2003
Grom	RPG	03-Feb-2003
1914 - The Great War	Strategy	03-Feb-2003
IL-2 Sturmovik: The Forgotten Battles	Simulator	04-Feb-2003
Battlefield 1942: The Road to Rome	Action	04-Feb-2003
Command & Conquer: Generals	Strategy	11-Feb-2003
Rainbow Six: Raven Shield	Tactical	13-Feb-2003
Praetorians	Strategy	14-Feb-2003
Nascar Racing 2003	Racing	18-Feb-2003
Devastation	FPS	25-Feb-2003
Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness	Action	25-Feb-2003
Mistmare	RPG	25-Feb-2003
The Gladiators	Strategy	25-Feb-2003
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	Tactical	25-Feb-2003
Galactic Civilizations	Strategy	25-Feb-2003
Post Mortem	Adventure	25-Feb-2003
Warrior Kings: Battles	Strategy	28-Feb-2003
Psychotoxic: Gateway to Hell	Action	01-Mar-2003
Lock On: Modern Air Combat	Simulator	04-Mar-2003
Chaser	FPS	25-Mar-2003
TOCA Race Driver	Racing	25-Mar-2003
Will Rock	FPS	25-Mar-2003
Cold Zero: The Last Stand	Action	25-Mar-2003
KnightShift	Strategy	25-Mar-2003

## Web Scores

How NAG reviews compare to internet site reviews

	Arx Fatalis	Prisoner of War	LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring
			
NAG /100	86	67	58
www.gamespy.com /100	75	77	59
www.gamespot.com /10	8.4	6.8	5.7
www.pc.ign.com /10	8	7.4	6.5

## PC Charts

### INCREDIBLE CONNECTION

1	The Sims Unleashed	Electronic Arts
2	LOTR Fellowship of the Ring	Vivendi
3	Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets	Electronic Arts
4	NFS Hot Pursuit 2	Electronic Arts
5	WarCraft III	Vivendi
6	Unreal Tournament 2003	Megarom
7	FIFA 2003	Electronic Arts
8	Battlefield 1942	Electronic Arts
9	The Sims	Electronic Arts
10	Half-life Platinum 2	Vivendi
11	Empire Earth	Vivendi
12	The Sims Deluxe	Electronic Arts
13	Diablo II	Vivendi
14	MOH Allied Assault	Electronic Arts
15	Age of Mythology	Microsoft
16	The Sims Vacation	Electronic Arts
17	Soldier of Fortune II	MegaRom
18	The Sims Hot Date	Electronic Arts
19	Icwind Dale II	Megarom
20	Empire Earth Expansion	Vivendi

### CHARTTRACK UK

1	The Sims Unleashed	EA Games
2	Harry Potter Chamber of Secrets	EA Games
3	Age of Mythology	Microsoft
4	The Sims Deluxe Edition	EA Games
5	FIFA 2003	EA Sports
6	Combat Flight Simulator 3	Microsoft
7	LOTR Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label
8	Norton Antivirus 2003	Norton
9	Rollercoaster Tycoon 2	Infogrames
10	The Sims Vacation	EA Games
11	Zoo Tycoon Marine Mania	Microsoft
12	Total Club Manager 2003	EA Sports
13	The Sims Hot Date	EA Games
14	Unreal Tournament 2003	Atari
15	Norton Internet Security 2003	Norton
16	MOH: Allied Assault	EA Games
17	Zoo Tycoon	Microsoft
18	Microsoft Office XP Student Ed.	Microsoft
19	Battlefield 1942	EA Games
20	Everquest Planes of Power	UbiSoft

# imagnet

## The Gamer's ISP



**128k ISDN**  
**only R199 p/m**

Imagnet + ISDN = Low Ping  
Low Ping = More Frags

"Gimme low ping, me luv  
u loooooong time"

- Lo Ping Beech



[www.imagnet.co.za](http://www.imagnet.co.za)

**EVERBLUE 2 [PS2]**

Capcom are finishing work on Everblue 2, an underwater diving adventure title. Players will embark upon a quest to find a sunken artefact, while dodging marine hazards such as sharks and aquatic conditions, sometimes going to town to interact with the locals for information and provisions. A multiplayer option allows two players to race each other around obstacle courses, seeking treasure. The game should be available on PlayStation 2 shortly after you read this.

**RESIDENT EVIL 4 [GC]**

Focusing on Leon Kennedy from the second instalment, Capcom's Resident Evil 4 will continue the series by plunging the player into the cradle of the progenitor virus. The atmosphere will be in keeping with previous titles in the franchise, and the game is expected late this year exclusive to the GameCube.

**VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION [PS2]**

Sega will relaease Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution on the PlayStation 2 in March 2003. Evolution will add two new characters, Muay Thai kickboxer Brad Burns and judo fighter Goh Hinogami, to the game as well refresh Virtua Fighter 4's graphics, change some of the moves for existing characters, and add a mission mode. It is not confirmed as yet whether this game will be exclusively available in Japan only.

**P.T.O. IV [PS2]**

KOEI Corporation will release P.T.O. IV exclusively for the PS2 in February. Like the previous games in the Pacific Theater of Operations series, P.T.O. IV is a naval strategy game set in World War II. Players can choose to command the naval forces of either the United States, Japan, Great Britain, or Germany, with the objective of seizing control of as many regions as possible. The game is single-player only, and will offer 15 different regional scenarios and two global campaigns to play through, all of which are based on actual events from WWII. Units in the game are also authentic, with over 300 different individual vessels at the player's disposal, including the likes of the USS Iowa, The Bismarck, and Battleship Yamato. Players will also be able to construct their own vessels in the game, using funds, oil, steel, and aluminium acquired from any regions under their control. Players will also have to concern themselves with politics, trade between nations, and the use of spies, amongst other things.

**U.S. GBA SALES TOP 1 MILLION IN 10 DAYS**

Nintendo's Game Boy Advance has sold 1 million consoles in just 10 days during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend in the States, according to retailer statistics. In the 17 months since its launch, Game Boy Advance has sold over nine million in the U.S., representing 30 per cent of all console sales. Predictions are that the console will soar past the 10 million mark by the end of 2003.

## Pulse Racer [Xbox]



Pulse Racer, from Jaleco Entertainment, is a futuristic combat racing game set in European urban environments. As well as racing, players will have various tools and weapons at their disposal. The most unusual aspect of this title is the fact that the driver's condition plays a role, as the body is subject to acceleration and responds to excesses thereof. Another innovation is the INFINITRAX track editing system, which improves in functionality as points are scored and new capabilities are unlocked. Up to four players can race simultaneously on a split-screen. By the time you read this, this title should be obtainable for Xbox.

## Super Bubble Pop [PS2 | Xbox | GC | GBA]

Another game soon to be released by Jaleco Entertainment is Super Bubble Pop for the PlayStation, Xbox, GameCube, and GBA. It is a puzzle adventure where you have to pop, bash, and smash your way through over 150 levels by ridding each stage of coloured bubbles by forming same coloured lines of three or more bubbles. Each of the five



characters (who are DJ's by the way) have nine different special attacks which will make for some interesting two-player mode games (which will only be available on the GC and Xbox). The game is expected to ship on all platforms sometime in early February.

## Aero Elite Combat Academy [PS2]



Aerodancing 4 is being released to Western audiences in a slightly modified form as Aero Elite Combat Academy. Players will have over 60 aircraft at their disposal, including fixed-wing and helicopters, and will boast a two-player mode. This title is expected to arrive any time after March.

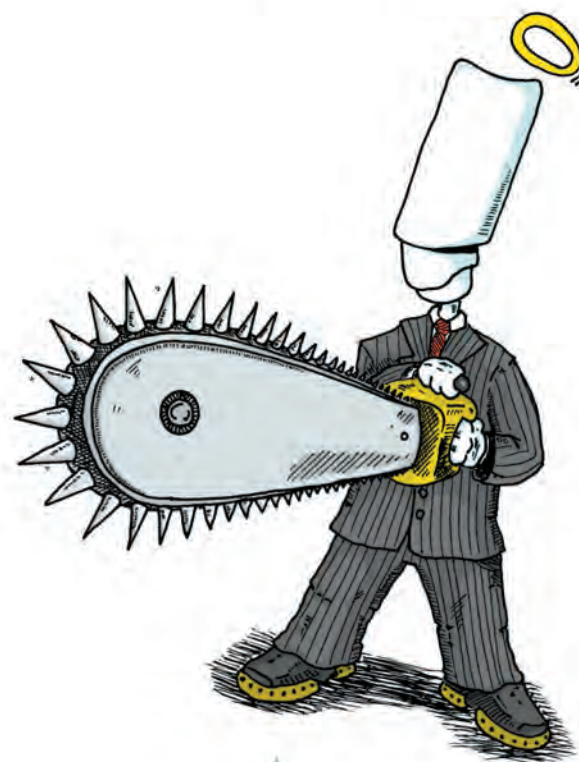
**GAME BOY ADVANCE™**
**Register at Club Nintendo NOW!**
[www.nintendo.co.za](http://www.nintendo.co.za)
**Nintendo**  
GAMING 24:7

## International Release Dates

TITLE	PLATFORM	RELEASE
Malice	Xbox	January 1
David Beckham Soccer	Xbox	January 1
Fuel	Xbox	January 1
Kung Fu Chaos	Xbox	January 1
Batman: Dark Tomorrow	Xbox	January 1
Freaky Flyers	Xbox	January 1
Golden Sun: The Lost Age	GBA	January 1
Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis	Xbox	January 1
Konami's Moto-X	Xbox	January 1
Haven: Call of the King	Xbox	January 1
Stake	Xbox	January 1
Black & Bruised	GC	January 2
Aliens vs. Predator	GBA	January 2
Haven: Call of the King	GC	January 2
Rally Championship	GC	January 2
Freedom: The Battle for Liberty Island	Xbox	January 6
Micro Machines	GC	January 6
E.T.: Return to the Green Planet	PS2	January 7
Resident Evil 2	GC	January 7
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	GC	January 7
HSX Hypersonic Xtreme	PS2	January 7
Dynasty Warriors 3 Xtreme Legends	PS2	January 7
Pride FC	PS2	January 12
Summoner: The Prophecy	GC	January 13
Panzer Dragoon Orta	Xbox	January 14
Everblue	PS2	January 14
Midnight Club II	PS2	January 14
Furious Karting	Xbox	January 14
The Sims	PS2	January 14
Fisherman's Bait 2003	PS2	January 14
Frogger Beyond	PS2	January 14
Disney Sports: Basketball	GC	January 14
Ghost Master	PS2	January 15
Primal	PS2	January 15
Robocop	PS2	January 15
Malice	PS2	January 15
Daredevil	PS2	January 15
Starsky & Hutch	PS2	January 15
Dark Cloud 2	PS2	January 15
Black & Bruised	PS2	January 15
My Street	PS2	January 15
Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball	Xbox	January 15
The Getaway	PS2	January 15
Army Men: Air Combat - The Elite Missions	GC	January 20
Battle Engine Aquila	PS2	January 21
Battle Engine Aquila	Xbox	January 21
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure	PS2	January 21
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	GBA	January 21
Risk	PS2	January 27
Skies of Arcadia Legends	GC	January 28
Devil May Cry 2	PS2	January 28
Muzzle Flash	Xbox	January 28
War of the Monsters	PS2	January 28

# WEBSITES DON'T KILL TREES!

# MAGAZINES KILL TREES!\*



**prophecy.co.za**  
gamers 'till we die

## Web Scores

How NAG reviews compare to  
internet site reviews

**NAG /100**

**www.planetnintendo.com /100**

**www.cube.ign.com /10**

**PIKMIN**



90

92

9.1

**SW: ROGUE  
SQUADRON II**

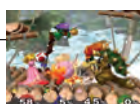


80

90

9.1

**SUPER SMASH  
BROS MELEE**



90

90

9.6

\* make a tree happy. Visit Prophecy instead

**ENIX AND SQUARE TO MERGE**

Enix, creators of the Dragon Quest series, and Square, creators of the Final Fantasy series, will merge in April by trading shares in both directions. Dragon Quest has been successful in Japan, while Final Fantasy is a strong brand in the West, and so both companies are looking at strengthening their positions. This deal will open a successful franchise to Enix while boosting Square's finances, which took losses from the film Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within and FFXI, which has not sold as well as anticipated.

**GBA GETS A FRIEND**

Handheld Games, who develop games for Game Boy Advance and Game Boy Color, have begun production of units called Amigo32 and Amigo64, which are memory units that plug into the GBA's link cable. These devices will provide 32kB and 64kB, respectively, of storage space for use with GBA games, thus removing the need for recording progress passwords. The units may include a clock, which some games can make use of, and games will need to have support for the Amigo to be coded in. Another version of the Amigo, the Amigo Enhancer, will be a developer-customisable unit that, on top of the base unit's features, will also include hard-wired game-specific data that will enhance the specific games that they will ship with. The units should become available by the second half of the year.

**NINTENDO IN SA**

Nintendo have begun officially distributing products in South Africa. As of November last year, consoles and gaming titles have become available locally through Futronic (Pty) Ltd, so look out for the games and consoles in your local stores. David Gosen, Managing Director, Sales and Marketing, Nintendo of Europe comments, "Nintendo have had a phenomenal year with the launch of two new consoles, and this exclusive distribution arrangement with Futronic reflects Nintendo's growing popularity and establishes South Africa as an important market. The Futronic team in place have the skills and experience to make a big impact on our business in the South African territory. With a superb line up of games to come, we are looking forward to seeing Nintendo established as the leading player in the South African console market."

**CAPCOM'S GAMECUBE LINE-UP**

Capcom's development team Production Studio 4 is currently at work on four GameCube titles for release later this year, all aimed at a mature audience. Viewtiful Joe will be an anime-cel-shaded side-scrolling action game; P.N. 03 will be an action game featuring a female mercenary with a laser gun; Dead Phoenix will be set in an ancient floating city haunted by various nasties; Killer 7 will be an action-adventure featuring an assassin with seven personalities.

## Wallace & Grommit [PS2 | Xbox | GC]

Bam Entertainment will be releasing Wallace & Grommit in October 2003 on the Xbox, GameCube and the PlayStation. Based on the characters from the Nick Park films, Wallace & Grommit will have to rescue baby animals from a zoo by solving puzzles and overcoming obstacles using sneaky manoeuvres and performing moves such as back flips and head spins while exploring the five levels (which have 24 sublevels) in the game.



## A Sound of Thunder [Xbox | PS2 | GC]

Bam Entertainment are also working on a game called A Sound of Thunder for the Xbox, GameCube and PlayStation, due for release in Q2 2003. Inspired by Ray Bradbury's time-travelling story of the same name, A Sound of Thunder puts players in the role of Travis Ryer, who must go back in time to keep a group known as Global Entropy from destroying the present timeline. The game will feature nine missions, all of which have puzzles that have some sort of effect on the timeline. Players will also be able to use 11 different weapons, ranging from baseball bats to disruptors that freeze enemies in time.



South Africa's most powerful console!

[www.nintendo.co.za](http://www.nintendo.co.za)



# The Best of the Best

## Don't die with the rest



**4 February 2003**

IGI 2 is a story driven single-player game – continuing from where the first game left off, Jones is once again at the forefront of preventing international terrorism, world catastrophe and betrayal at the very highest level.

The game will utilize graphics technology provided by the next-generation Unreal engine to power 15 new single-player missions that include the discovery of a cache of biological weapons and stopping an armed gang from terrorizing a London bank.



**4 March 2003**



**4 March 2003**

Set in Somalia in 1993, Delta Force – Black Hawk Down is based upon and around the Operation Restore Hope and Task Force Ranger campaigns and follows members of the elite Delta Force and US Army Rangers as they participate in a number of daring raids against the oppressive Somali warlords in and around Mogadishu.

TOCA Race Driver introduces a character-based narrative and episodic storyline. The game blends real world global championships with a fictional cast; the player takes the central role of aspiring driver Ryan McKane.



**28 March 2003**



**4 February 2003**

Splinter Cell will grant players access to the highest echelons of national security, where shadowy operatives have the freedom to do whatever it takes to safeguard America. In Splinter Cell, the player controls Sam Fisher, a field operative of a secretive "black-ops" NSA sub-agency called Third Echelon.

Feel the power of commanding a modern jet fighter. Fly a variety of combat aircraft in the most graphically rich, audio intense game environment ever created for a combat flight simulator. Lock On: Modern Air Combat combines a broad scope of game play that includes a dynamic campaign system, an immersive combat environment, and in-your-face action.



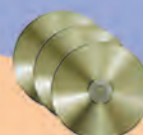
**11 March 2003**



**11 February 2003**

Unreal II is an intense gaming experience that immerses players in an epic story-driven adventure featuring superb graphics. As a Colonial Authority Marshall, you're patrolling a sector of the frontier with three crew members when an interstellar war erupts about you!

For further information please contact  
MegaRom Interactive (Pty) Ltd.  
Tel: (011) 805-7303, Fax: (011) 805-7302  
E-mail: sales@megarom.co.za



Proudly distributed by

**MegaRom**  
Interactive (Pty) Ltd.

#### NVIDIA'S NEW LAPTOP GPU

Nvidia have announced their answer to ATI's Radeon Mobility 9000 DirectX 8-compliant notebook graphics chip. The GeForce4 4200 Go chip is based on the GeForce4 Ti 4200 power plant, and supports a comparable range of features and functionality.

#### IBM SUPERCOMPUTERS

IBM have begun building two supercomputers that will be the most powerful in the world to date, with a combined theoretical peak computing capacity exceeding that of the world's current 500 fastest supercomputers combined. The two machines will be called the Blue Gene, containing 130 000 advanced processors and capable of up to 360 trillion mathematical operations per second, and the ASCI Purple, the latter to be used in calculating and predicting the effects of ageing of nuclear weapon stockpiles.

#### XBOX MODDERS BANNED!

According to reports, Microsoft have begun to permanently ban Xbox units with unofficially altered hardware from their Xbox Live! online gaming service. Units logging onto the service are interrogated by the server in order to establish whether they've been tampered with, and if such modifications are detected, the offending units' electronically stored serial numbers are logged and they are permanently banned from the system.

#### PHONE TOOTH

British scientists have developed a prototype cellular phone unit that can be implanted into a molar tooth. The device receives cell-phone signals and converts them into sound vibrations that travel to the user's inner ear through the skull. At the moment, the system is one-way only, meaning that calls can be received, but not made, and the "phone tooth" has no way of reversing the process in order to allow its user to talk into it.

#### DIGITAL LIBRARY INITIATED

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology have launched DSpace, a centralised online archiving resource for academic documents, after a four-year development period. The system runs on open-source software co-developed with Hewlett-Packard, and is primarily intended for use by academic institutions such as universities. For more information visit [www.dspace.org](http://www.dspace.org)

#### AMD ATHLON 64

What was previously codenamed Clawhammer has now been given an official name: AMD Athlon 64, reflecting AMD's move to 64-bit computing. The first Athlon 64 systems should be appearing on the market in March or April of next year.

## Game Boy interface for GameCube



Nintendo have announced a new peripheral for use with the GameCube. Dubbed the GameCube Game Boy Player, the unit will be a shallow platform that fits under the console and allows a Game Boy Advance to be connected to it, enabling Game Boy games to be displayed on a television. This will effectively expand the range of games available to GameCube users to over a thousand. The device will also facilitate multiplayer functionality, allowing multiple Game Boy Advance owners to plug in, the first player's display appearing on the TV while the others play on their hand-helds in the usual manner. The GameCube Game Boy Player will be available in Japan in March, and will launch in the States and other Western markets in May.

## Revolutionary Gyration mouse



Gyration have unveiled a mouse that makes use of gyroscopic motion sensors, thus removing the need for a mousing surface, allowing the pointing device to be used in mid-air. In addition to this unusual capability, this cordless mouse, called the Ultra Cordless Optical Mouse, can also act as a normal optical mouse and is available in two versions - one with a range of about 7.5 metres, the other possessing a range of up to 30 metres!

## Palm-powered PDA watch



Fossil have developed a wristwatch-sized Palm-powered PDA, called the Wrist PDA. Although rather chunky and quite heavy compared to ordinary watches, the device is surprisingly functional for a unit of its size. The Wrist PDA runs Palm OS 4.1 on a 33MHz DragonBall processor, has 2MB of memory and has a touch-screen display about 25mm square at a resolution of 160x160 pixels, all of which is sufficient to run basic applications and even some rudimentary games. A USB cradle will allow synchronising data with a PC and recharging the battery, which has a life of about four days and requires a couple of hours to recharge, and an infra-red port allows communication with other Palm devices. This gadget is expected to be available by the middle of next year - Dick Tracey, eat your heart out!

## Intel launches Hyper-Threading Technology

Intel Corporation recently introduced its innovative Hyper-Threading (HT) Technology for the new Intel® Pentium® 4 processor at 3.06 GHz. HT Technology enables a new class of high-performance desktop PCs that can work quickly among several computing applications at the same time, or provide extra performance for individual software programs that are multithreaded. HT Technology can boost PC performance by up to 25 percent.

In addition to bringing HT Technology to desktop PC users, Intel reached a PC milestone in launching the Pentium 4 processor at 3.06 GHz. This is the first commercial microprocessor to operate at 3 billion cycles-per-second and is made possible by using the industry's most advanced 0.13-micron manufacturing technology. The Pentium 4 processor is the world's highest performance desktop microprocessor.

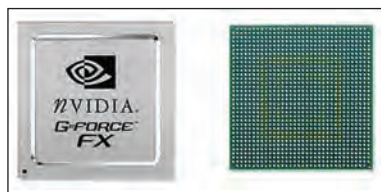


## Nokia gets gamer-friendly



Next year will see the introduction of numerous new devices from Nokia. As well as to-be-expected handsets featuring MMS, Java, Bluetooth, Email and camera and radio capabilities; one particular unit, the N-Gage, will support console-style games created by third-party developers. This particular product is expected to be available in February. Full keyboards will also become even more common.

## Nvidia's GeForce FX



Nvidia's new graphics processing unit, the GeForce FX, formerly codenamed NV30, brings the Nvidia family of GPUs up-to-date with DirectX 9 and AGP 3.0. The latter means that the new cards will no longer require external power. The processor boasts 3 geometry processors and 8 pixel processors, thus enabling use of Pixel Shader 2.0, as well as dual 400MHz RAMDACs, 128-bit DDR II interface and DVI and TV-Out interfaces.

### MICROSOFT TABLET MOBILE COMPUTER

Microsoft's new Tablet mobile computer has been launched in New York. A common feature across the varying third-party designs is the large screen and stylus for direct, hand-written input. These systems merge design and functionality elements of traditional laptops and PDAs, complementing the stylus feature with a keyboard and mouse. Manufacturers already in line to be producing Tablets include Acer, Fujitsu, HP, NEC, Panasonic and Toshiba.

### CELL-PHONE KEYBOARDS ADVANCE

Fastap is an innovative new keypad design intended for use with small, hand-held devices such as mobile phones. The design allows the same amount of space as that used by current cell-phone keypads to accommodate a full keyboard's functionality, including all 26 letters, 10 digits and several special function keys. Fastap was developed by David Levy, former head of Apple ergonomic design, and will greatly reduce the inconvenience inherent in typing text messages or accessing Web pages on a phone. Cellular network providers interested in stimulating use of their data services will likely find Fastap attractive. Digit Wireless, the holders of the Fastap patent, expect to make the device commercially available some time next year.

### QUANTUM LEAPS IN COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY

Until recently, the idea of a "quantum computer" was the stuff of science fiction, but two research teams have recently taken significant steps toward realising this technology. A team at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, has developed a 'qubit' (quantum bit) design that incorporates a read-out mechanism. Qubits, by making use of the quantum properties of atoms and subatomic particles, can be in several states simultaneously, thus can theoretically make possible multiple computations. This technology is expected to be reaching practical levels of development, at least in laboratory terms, by 2007. Another team of scientists, based at Innsbruck University in Austria, has managed to execute a computation on a quantum level using a single trapped calcium ion. They are also making progress in terms of using photons to carry information from one qubit to another, crucial for the development of arrays capable of storing and manipulating data. Quantum techniques are currently very difficult to implement due to the sensitivity of the processes to external influences, which result in "decoherence".



Diablo Battle Chest



R199



PG54



Empire Earth+ Expansion



Great Empires Collection2



Half Life Platinum



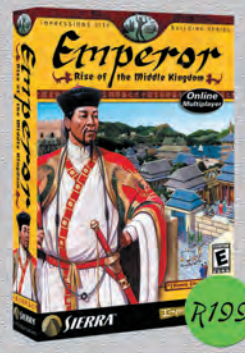
R199



R299



R499



R199

### Best Seller SERIES



R99

there are lots more Best Seller games



R299

Icewind Dale2



R299

Icewind Dale: Ark of the warrior



R499



R499

Hunter the Reckoning



R299

Aliens vs Predator2: Primal Hunt



R499

Spyro- Enter the Dragonfly.



R499

The Thing



R499

The Scorpion King.



R299

No One Lives Forever2



R299

Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza



R399

Crash Bandicoot

05/01/2003

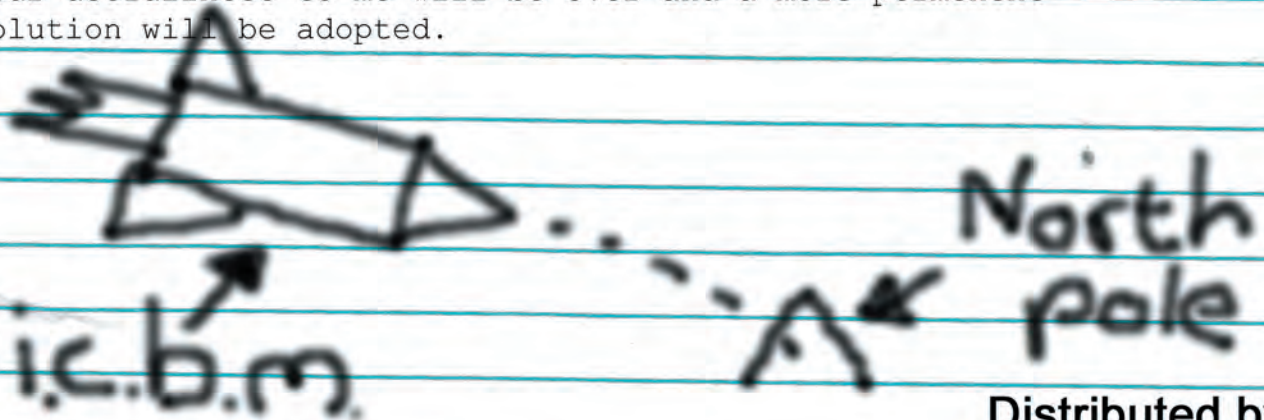
Dear Santa,

As far as I can see you are a monopoly.....Lack of competition has made for shockingly abhorrent service. It seems that my christmas list was totally disregarded, as I received only a small fraction of the items that I listed. I feel that is my responsibility... duty to take the following action.



As you can see I have rudolf..... I am NOT scared to use him. Deliver my presents within 10-7 days. If there are any items missing from my list, then your friend rudolf will also be returned with pieces missing. You have 7 days.....

If you decide to disregard this letter tooo, be warned. your usefullness to me will be over and a more permanent solution will be adopted.



Distributed by

**Com/tek**  
The Systems Distributor

Warm regards

Michael (age 24)

ps, remember you brought this on yourself...



# command & conquer: generals multiplayer test [limited]

developer: Westwood  
publisher: Electronic Arts  
distributor: ea africa (011) 516-8300  
release date: q1 2003  
genre: Real Time Strategy  
internet: www.westwood.com

When I first got wind of this Multiplayer Test I immediately started pleading and begging Electronic Arts Africa for a copy, "a chance to experience a taste of greatness", I said, trying to butter them up with my tried and tested selection of PR quips - it's a pity they had already singed me up, something I only found out about ten minutes after I went down on my knees and assumed the pleading position. I can never win. At least I got to play the game and who needs dignity anyway, it's overrated. After a tentative installation process - test software tends to be a little queasy on any system - it was up and running and I was there behind my monitor with the raised eyebrow of a discerning game reviewer.

Once again, this report was compiled on early software so I've overlooked certain bugs, graphical glitches etc. and there are probably a few extras that'll find their

way into the finished product. The idea here was to help Westwood by testing the software in a multiplayer environment and reporting any anomalies directly to them. In addition, if you're the type of person who already knows all the technical details there are to



know about Command & Conquer: Generals, then you're not going to learn anything new here. This article is for those of you who would like to know how the game feels, looks and plays - an initial impression if you will, from a <cough> industry veteran. There are a great number of cool things about Generals that are going to impress you, having said

that I can't help thinking that many of the excellent 'unique selling points' of Generals were promised way back when Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun was in early development, not the 3D engine bits but some of the other elements, like floodlights at night actually contributing to the play dynamic, I just can't remember, that's the problem with the hype engine - plausible

deniability. But enough here, this introduction is already too long and will probably get edited by that clown at the [that's

enough thanks, Ed].

If you're a Westwood fan and enjoy your real time strategy games with a little more lead and gunpowder instead of fairy dust and fireballs then Command & Conquer: Generals is going to be so far up your alley you'll forget to go home... or something like that. I'm a big Westwood fan - I even really enjoyed Emperor: Battle for Dune, I'm one of those easy to please Westwood groupies that will probably always enjoy anything from them no matter how lame [real time strategy games only that is]. There's just something about Command & Conquer that works, it's an indefinable quality that make Westwood and their titles unique and commercially successful. The point of all this is that Generals certainly lives up to the high standard set by its predecessors and will certainly silence more than a handful of Westwood critics.

The game is set approximately 20 years from now and instead of relying on a mysterious substance from outer space or an alternative 'historic' storyline, Generals paints the battle arena as realistically as possible - a future look at modern warfare if you like - 20 years from now. This setting is interesting in that it allows for a few high-tech weapons and concepts but is let down by not offering enough innovation or any really technologically superior weapons - 20 years is a long time - I expect the story will explain some of these types of inconsistencies away but for now and based on this multiplayer test that is the situation.

On offer are three different, I'm loathe to call them races so I'll go with sides and armies - China, USA and the GLA [Global Liberation Army]. The GLA is the type



▲ The Chinese drop a nuke - seriously sexy!

▲ The role of aircraft in Generals has increased exponentially - you can now conduct airborne battles



▲ A battle drone in action



▲ Someone takes out the ink factory



▲ God's magnifying glass

by General Moral Minority

► Shoot out the lead coach and wait for the return of the engine

of army that employs those cowardly terrorist suicide bombers - something I would have thought Westwood should have been a little more careful on considering the shocking news we receive on a weekly basis from that depressing spot on the planet - the Middle East. This is a sensitive subject and although I'm no prude, I was amused (others might not be) when instructing my soldier to attack a tank, only to have him run about, arms flailing until he detonated near his target.

It's nice to have a third army to play with in a Command & Conquer game even though careful balancing will ensure they all end up exactly the same save a few sound effects and graphics. The real difference between the armies is with the player and his or her playing style. So instead of true variation you have an elaborate choice to make. The sides work roughly like this, the USA relies on technology and surveillance to prevail, the Chinese rely more on propaganda and [you-have-to-see-the-nuclear-detonation] nuclear weapons, the GLA are styled around any liberation army you care to mention, armed with scuds and soldiers who will die for any cause. In addition to these different armies [in the final game] you'll be able to select a General to command your army. These Generals have different attributes and unique special abilities that can be used to improve your chances on the battlefield. As you play you earn



◄ When the engine arrives - Bang!

other innovation in favour of a rotating battlefield and a handful of special effects. Just a side-note on 3D engines to any developer that might care out there - thanks, gaming kind is very happy that you can all do 3D now, can we please move along and stop boasting about 3D features and engines before the respectable realm of strategy turns into another technology fashion show, like the FPS genre.

There are many other cool things you'll find in the game besides a really solid RTS experience, for example when you place a structure you can rotate it into the position you like, making your base look a little more natural. This has no strategic benefit other than perhaps making your opponents reluctant to hammer your base because of your excellent landscaping skills. Other new things include the option to add a battle or scout drone to your vehicles, the battle drones feature a light machine gun and will repair your unit if damaged, the scout allows for improved sight and reveals hidden units. Beside these there are plenty other small touches that impress including the fact that wounded soldiers will limp from the battlefield. Although the interface has changed dramatically, falling along the bottom, and the entire experience is 3D and every unit is different, it all still handles like it should and plays like a Command & Conquer game and that's a good thing.

experience, i.e. the more butt-kicking you deliver the quicker you gain experience, when your experience meter is full you will gain a star i.e. rank, the higher the rank the better the bonus, for example you can order a parachute ranger drop over enemy territory, the higher you rank the more meat bombs are dropped from the plane. Further to this, in some cases, you are not permitted to build certain units until acquiring a higher rank, I guess this will ensure players attack more and earn experience instead of camping out in their monster bases. This is sounding more and more like WarCraft III? The addition of the General upgrades adds a, dare I say it, RPG flavour to the game and will certainly make penning a comprehensive strategy guide that much tougher. After playing a number of matches online over the last few weeks preceding the mayhem and chaos of completing the magazine, I have to report that the earning of experience and deciding on skills to add to the battle hasn't been utilised enough and ends up feeling like something that was tacked on at the end. I'm pleased to report that although the game has a sparkly new 3D engine, Westwood hasn't abandoned all



▲ Special 3D effects, lighting, explosions and stuff that'll make you go, "yeah baby"



◄ Upgrade your general here!

▼ The scout drone repairing a medical vehicle



## will rock

2003 is going to be a happy time for action gamers as the list of First-Person Shooters is growing daily and there are some class acts on the way, including Will Rock from US developer Saber Interactive, published by one of the largest publishers worldwide, Ubisoft.

FPS and technology go hand in hand on the PC, and Saber Interactive is a company which has a lot of focus on the advancement of technology and creation of tools. The thorny issue is that most developers spout off about their innovative ideas and engine along with made up vocabulary to confuse, whereas there is nothing really discernable about what they are showing. Matthew Karch, President and CEO at Saber Interactive, agreed with these comments and explained in detail about his company's ideas to correspondent Derek dela Fuente.

"I agree, in the majority of PC games the average gamer really can't discern one 3D engine from the next. In my opinion, this is due to the legitimate desire by publishers to make the game available to as wide an audience as possible. Thus most games are made with minimum specs in mind. It is difficult to really show off your technology when you have to create a game that runs on machines with slow processors and outdated video cards. So all games have the same sort of look that really prevents you from distinguishing one game from the next and therefore one engine from the next. There is only one company I know of that can make a game where the minimum spec is a Radeon 9700. Most companies need to think about the guy who hasn't been able to upgrade to the GeForce 3 or Radeon 8500 (or better). What distinguishes many games is the quality of artwork. In our case, we have extremely talented artists who have tremendous experience in developing 3D art for in-game art and animations." "Having said that, there are certain elements which do set the high-end engines apart from the rest of the crop. The first is optimisations. The better your rendering pipeline is optimised the more detailed your scenes can be. The better engines are finely tuned

and streamlined to render scenes quickly. The second element, which sets apart the great engines, is feature set. The more robust engines support a wide range of features such as bump mapping, projected shadows, detail textures, mirrors, dynamic lighting and a host of others. Of course, each of these elements needs to be highly optimised as well in order for it to be used in a game."

"As far as Saber is concerned, we have always been a technology-first company. Two programmers, who, in my opinion, are easily among the world's best, created our engine. In addition to creating a fast rendering engine that supports a very wide range of highly optimised features, they have gone the extra mile to create features not seen anywhere else. For example, we have implemented a combination of rigid body dynamics and the real-time calculation of object break points to render, in real-time, the breaking of any object we designate as breakable. The in-game implications of this technology are remarkable. When a player shoots a breakable object, the object breaks as it would in the real world and its components fall and bounce naturally. This not only adds a large dose of realism to the game environment but has real game play implications. Using our technology, for example, we could have a player break through a wall. As the wall breaks outward, any opponent unfortunate enough to be hit by the falling chunks will get killed. This adds strategically to the game play by allowing the player to time when to break the wall. Another game play implication, in the case of Will Rock, is the Medusa Gun. This weapon turns an opponent to stone (in

real time) and breaks him up into pieces. Another example of technology that we have created that is not only cool but also functional is real-time procedural morphing. This technology allows us to realistically morph objects in real-time. We have used this technology in many of our in-game weapons to melt, shrivel and blow opponents up like balloons - all procedurally - while the opponent continues to move.

developer: sabre interactive  
publisher: ubisoft  
distributor: megarom (011) 805-7303  
release date: q1 2003  
genre: first person shooter  
internet: www.ubisofy.com



▲ Now that's what we call gibbs!



▼ Will realised that he was in trouble - if a bird that size crapped accurately, he was toast!



▼ Someone is going to pay. Who said any of you could bring your mother-in-law to this party?





No other FPS has integrated weapons that employ such advanced technology for the end-effect. In Will Rock there are many ways for an opponent to die." Talking the talk only stands for something if you truly have a good game and, at this stage, Will Rock looks like it is heading in the right direction.

Hand in hand with technology comes concept and ideas, and Matthew, along with the assistance of Vladimir Chernysh, the Art Director, came up with the concept. Having played Doom, Unreal, Quake and Serious Sam they wanted to create their own slant with a story that was also pivotal to the game. They knew they could create something that could compete and even surpass these titles in terms of technology and visuals.

Will Rock's strong story centres around Willford Rockwell (aka Will Rock), an unlikely hero whose body is inhabited by the spirit of a defiant Titan. Launched into a fantastic adventure through time, Will arrives in Ancient Greece where he must battle some of mythology's most powerful foes.

Players will experience fast-paced shooter action through 10 huge varied levels and additional expertly designed multiplayer maps. The Ancient Greek/Roman setting allows for unique weapons that support the game's theme, including a Medusa Gun, Flaming Crossbow and Acid Rifle. The game's 'real-time shattering' technology allows for a wealth of breakable objects, providing gamers with the experience of a truly interactive environment. With Will Rock's advanced game play technology and level design, players must rely on both quick thinking and reactions to solve environmental puzzles and survive the hardcore action.

"In order to better support the storyline and fully explore this rich area of Greek mythology, we have limited the environment to the hills, valleys, cities, dungeons, coliseums, theatres, rivers and caves surrounding Mount Olympus of ancient Greece, with a large dose of fantasy and artistic freedom thrown in. The areas are very diverse - there is little repetition of environments, texturing, etc. There are over 25 opponents in the game and dozens of different types of environments.

"In one area of the game, you are attempting to enter the great Coliseum. A row of snipers appear under the arches of the coliseum wall. You must duck and shoot your way through this area in order to avoid getting killed.

In another area, you exit a stone mine and descend through a cave to an opening on a plateau surrounded by mountains. You are attacked simultaneously by hordes of rats, numbering over 50 at a time. In the course of this battle you will have killed nearly 500 opponents before you can move on.

The strongest selling points of Will Rock are the visuals and the game play, concerning weapons. There is



certainly justification that the screenshots do not do the game justice - it really looks awesome. The world that we have created is very real and detailed. The weapons are also lots of fun. In what other game can you turn an opponent to stone or melt, shrivel and burn him, or even blow him up and pop him like a balloon?

Will Rock is very immersive.

Lots of objects to break, bridges to lower, catapults and battering rams to activate, etc.

There is also a myriad of opponents and types of attacks, so a real challenge is offered! As in many FPS games, as you progress, you are rewarded with bigger weapons offering different modes of attack. Of course, bigger is not always better.

One of our guys can complete the entire game with nothing more than our default weapons - a shovel and a revolver - he is probably the only person in the world who could do this.

There is some in-game dialogue between Will and his alter ego Prometheus, along with cut scenes. Most of the story, however is told comic-style, ala Max Payne. In addition to the typical stuff - Health, Armour, Points, Weapon in Use, Ammo Remaining and Power Ups available, we also have gold points, which tie in to our power-up sub-game." Asked to sum up was simple for Matthew.

"Take a deep breath, enjoy the scenery, prepare your arsenal and get ready to rock!"



▼ Greek architecture a-la medieval England



# shade: wrath of angels

developer: black element software  
 publisher: cerega  
 distributor: tba  
 release date: 2003  
 genre: horror adventure  
 internet: www.shade-game.com

Cenega Publishing is still a relatively unknown software company, but at the recent European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) in London they showed they are keen to mix it with the major players. With their HQ in Prague, in the Czech Republic, they have opened an office in the UK, with Germany to follow, along with major distribution deals worldwide. The first real presence for Cenega will come with the release of *Another War* and *Knights of the Cross*, two very interesting strategy titles, but not games that will set computer gamers rushing to the shops.

In terms of development cycle, *Shade: Wrath of Angels* is in its early days, although 18 months have passed since creation and development began. Looks like sorting out the concept and getting their mindset right to 'wow' the audience has all been worth the time and effort, if opinion from ECTS means anything. There were a number of titles on display at the show that we all

know are going to be massive successes - *Splinter Cell*, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *Burnout 2* and a few others - and you can certainly add *Shade* to this list if the early code develops and progresses far enough. Now, we have all seen games that have great ideas that fizzle out, but you have to remember that Black Element Software are slightly unusual. Firstly, they are owned by Bohemia Interactive, who themselves created last year's top selling PC title, *Operation Flashpoint*, and Bohemia are assisting the team to ensure it is pixel perfect. More interestingly,



▼ The lower reaches of this room were recently vacated by the 2003 "Bean Fan" convention



the reason why Bohemia bought out Black Element and took them under their wing was because they were impressed with the team's ideas and technology and were eager to develop their potential even further. The fact that Bohemia (and, consequently, Black Element) is part of a holding company that is Cenega means their focus and expertise will be sourced and used in the best possible way.

No matter what goes on behind the scenes, the proof is and always will be in what you see, and first impressions of *Shade: Wrath of Angels* are positive, with polished graphics and a number of good ideas that execute themselves well onscreen.

*Shade*, a 3D horror adventure action game with a

strong focus on ambience and a rich storyline, utilises the third person view with the first person view coming into play depending on the scene and weapon. Assuming the role of an as yet un-named main character, who is the employee of the Ultimate Being, you are dispatched to a small European village to try to solve a number of 'miracles' the local priest has reported. You soon realise at quite an early stage that this employee isn't what you initially believe him to be: after all, how many people who work for God are as handy with a gun and knife as this bloke. Getting really detailed information as to the character and his exact requirements was not possible, but this is easily understood, for the events within the game and its unfolding story are integral to the excitement of the game and giving away too much this early would lessen the impact.

Lovers of dark horror will easily spot that the team

has been inspired by movies like *Return of the Living Dead*, *Evil Dead* and the games such as *Resident Evil* and *Alone in the Dark*. Plenty of cut scenes and full motion video are interspersed into the game to add to the story-telling and bringing the player up

▼ As with most games, disputes are settled through the "hot lead discourse" method



to date with events and requirements.

Shade will encompass around fifty missions covering a variety of environments - underground military base, alchemist workshops, ruined monastery, concentration camp and caves among others. The game is split into five chapters - 5 themes that in turn are split into "sub-events" within these environments.

On view was action from the castle setting and a military base, but both were far from complete. Both levels were from the first theme, 'miracle of resurrection', and offered some interesting insights into what we can expect from the finished product. Not only did the castle itself look the part (plenty of dark corners, doorways and passages) but this is where Filip Doksansky, programmer, showed off some impressive technology features. Your character picks up a flashlight and the effect this has in terms of lighting is something to be seen. Equally splendid was the way in

which the enemy reacted when shot: they fell as you would expect them to. OK, the AI in the short demo we saw made them look the bad side of idiotic, but there was nothing wrong with their appearance or reactions. Black Element is currently working hard on this. The enemies will be able to hide and also run when injured, and co-operate. (An enemy is injured and running but notices the player in a particular place: he may go there and possibly get him.) AI is programmed both by basic dynamic functions and by scripts. The aim is to offer the player worthy enemies that are a pleasure to fight. As for the



non-player characters, they will feature just to complete the story and will figure in cut-scenes, but they won't co-operate with the player, nor help him fight.

Your character himself, dressed in jeans, shirt and a waistcoat, is only viewed from a near third-person camera, although it didn't seem to detract from the overall game. He can, of course, walk, run and duck sideways, and is able to shoot from the hip. One interesting fact is that while in sniper mode you won't be able to move. Other games in a similar genre make things slightly unrealistic by incorporating this ability: snipers don't move while aiming! Shade has it right.

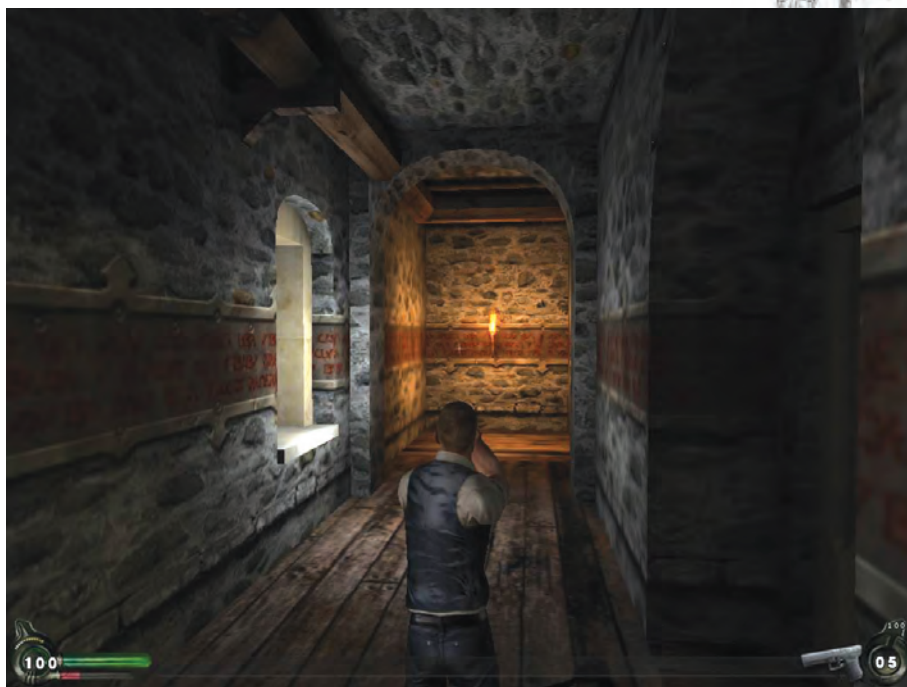
As you would expect from a game in this genre, there is a plethora of enemies coming in all shapes and forms - undead (ghouls, zombies and skeletons, for example), goblins

(miners/fighters), soldiers, terrorists, alchemists, moor beasts, priests - the list is endless and very intriguing. As is the weapons roster.

Single-handed weapons, in the form of a knife, torch (the flaming kind), sword and an iron pipe, are complemented by two-handed ones, including a flame-thrower, a grenade launcher and a variety of rifles and machine guns.

There is plenty more to tell you about this game, so in a few months we shall interrogate the team and get some real inside details about the innovations and actual game play on offer! Check out the

[www.Shade.com](http://www.Shade.com) web-site. Shade: Wrath of Angels is scheduled for an April/May 2003 release, but expect to see a lot more on this one before then.



▼ After all those musty old rooms, getting a breath of fresh air doesn't hurt - especially when the scenery is this pretty...



# PRIMAL



PlayStation®2



[www.playstations.co.za](http://www.playstations.co.za)

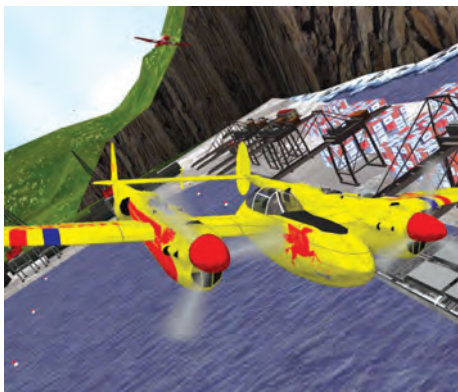


\*PS and "PlayStation" and "PSone", "PSP" and PlayStation®2 are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Primal is a product of Sony Computer Entertainment. All product titles, publisher names, trademarks, artwork and associated imagery are trademarks and / or copyright material of their respective owners.

© 2001 Ster-Kinekor Home Entertainment. This artwork remains the sole property of SKHE, and may only be used with their express permission.

## xtreme air racing

Mention flight sims to the average PC gamer and their eyes will glaze over. While some flight sims have done well in the past, it seems that perceptions around these titles – especially in the media – are somewhat negative. But one small UK company which specialises in this area is Just Flight, and they are just about to release Xtreme Air Racing (XAR). Now, no blank looks or sniffled yawns, for Derek dela Fuente had an opportunity to speak with Victory Simulation responsible for putting this great title together!



"The focus has been to make XAR a racing game. We did not put lots of buttons in the cockpit to start engines or VOR's, etc. It's 'NASCAR in the sky' if you like. However, there is a depth of realism and the fidelity of the flight model that will appeal to the flight sim enthusiasts. We wanted a game that a twelve-year old could pick up and fly and have fun and be competitive. Select Bronze difficulty and turn off ground collisions, allow Bob Hoover (aviation legend) to coach you around the course and you are away! The in-game AI is pretty smart and even if you're a terrible pilot you'll always feel like you're in on the action." "Xtreme Air Racing recreates accurate representations of the airplanes raced annually at Reno, Nevada, together with realistic 3D-terrain graphics which combine to provide the ultimate high speed racing experience. Instead of racing cars around a track, try to visualize airplanes in the sky racing at lightening speed. Fly between 50-200 feet above the ground in a turbo-charged, nitrous burning, steel monkey with over 3,000 horsepower at the touch of your fingertips. Experience racing around pylons 50 ft off the ground. Fly so low to the ground that your propeller kisses the sagebrush, while surrounded by seven relentless competitors."

20 highly detailed aircraft compete in exotic locations around the world. From the jungles of Thailand to the scenic coast of England, to the snowy fjords of Iceland to the majesty of the Swiss Alps – Xtreme Air Racing has it all. When you're ready to compete with the big boys, fly in the granddaddy of all air races, the National Championships at Reno. In between heats, choose from a number of aircraft and engine options, in order to get peak performance from your plane. Seasoned pros will love the high-fidelity simulation model with over 200 independent variables, while



amateur pilots can jump into the cockpit in the bronze class to compete from the starting line. With state of the art artificial intelligence, the computer pilot's opponents adapt to your skill level. No matter what skill level is selected, you will face a new, invigorating challenge.

As a virtual pilot you can indulge in aerobatic stunts or test your survival skills by dog fighting in the air combat section. This dog fighting action will be a favourite with action fans – it's slick and straight to the point. Don't worry too much about the controls, just steer well and stay high! If you blow an engine, and don't coast back to the pits, you'll be lucky if you make a successful dead-stick landing and survive to tell the tale.

Xtreme Air Racing is one of the few racing games where engine management during a race is critical. All of the technology, the engine, flight models, AI, etc. is proprietary and home grown. (There's a lot of code under the hood.) The thing about XAR is it feels right and you don't feel out of place when learning and playing the game if you are new to this genre, as you would with most other sims. That is not to say all you ardent sim fans should view this as one for the kids. This offers a lot to everyone, without any compromises. The tutorial is

developer: victory simulation  
publisher: just flight  
distributor: tba  
release date: tba  
genre: flight sim racing  
internet: www.egames.com

one of the many great features on offer! "Having Hoover respond to you as you fly around the course is a big bonus. It helps you if you've never flown. Comments such as, 'Turn on the spray bar water', 'You're getting a bit wide on those turns', etc. add to the enjoyment. As the team put it, it's the only chance the average person is going to have aviation legend Bob Hoover in the cockpit, making suggestions.

If you are worried that you may need a super-duper PC to run this beast of a game then fear not, for the team themselves have run the game in their office on a P300

megahertz system with a TNT 2 and also a Voodoo 2 and have gotten a frame rate in the twenties. Of course, if you've got the horsepower, crank everything up.

We thought we would allow the team to end with a slightly more thoughtful comment to please the connoisseur sim fan to prove their total focus, love and dedication to this title... not that it was needed! "The most satisfying thing was going up to Reno and having Lyle Shelton fly the game. Lyle owns Rare Bear, and has won the Gold Unlimited Championship at Reno six times, and is in the

motorsport hall of fame. He flew it and told me that the flight model is as close to the real thing as he's ever seen.

A similar compliment came from Skip Holm, pilot of Dago Red and winner of the Gold Unlimited the past three years. Skip too put the game through its paces, trying out engine emergency landings, etc. His comment was, "Yep, it feels about right."

"Creating the game has been like raising a child: a lot of work, at times frustrating, but in the end a lot of fun and very rewarding. It's also been a real pleasure getting to know and work with people like Bob Hoover and the rest of the race pilots. We believe the effort has been well worth it in terms of a superb end product."



▲ Jack soon learned that his hidden missile launcher was really helping him win races



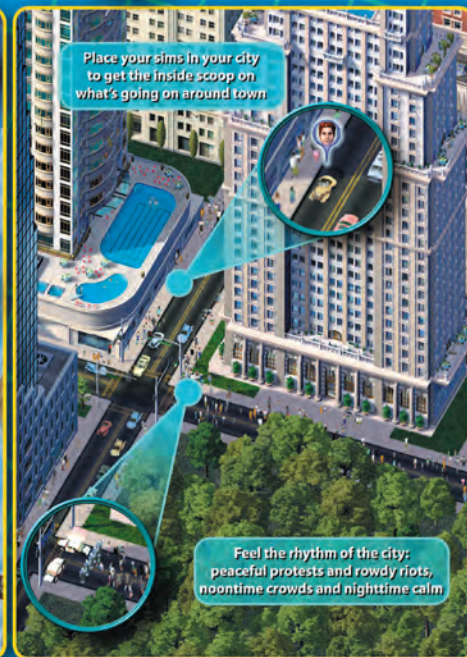
God's Hand



Mayor's Limo



Your Sims

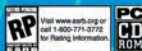


# SIMCITY 4

Create a world imagined only by you.

Build and run the city of your dreams.

Immerse yourself in the lives of your Sims.



Find out more at [SimCity.com](http://SimCity.com)



game

DION

makro

Incredible CONNECTION

LOOK & LISTEN WE KNOW MUSIC

you can at cna

TOYS R US

Pick n Play hypermarket

# ufo: aftermath

There is slight confusion about a new title well into development from Czech based Altar Interactive, with a rich and intriguing background story to events, both game and its history. Derek dela Fuente talked to chief spokesman, Jiri Rydl, to find out more about the game, UFO: Aftermath and the team developing it.

After finishing Original War for Virgin Interactive in 2001, Altar was offered a chance to continue the Dreamland Chronicles: Freedom Ridge project, which had been cancelled by Virgin. After signing the deal, they soon realized that there was very little to go forward with, so they decided to start from scratch, which brings us to UFO: Aftermath - a completely new game, despite the fact that Altar has been inspired by many things, including classic games, movies, and comic books.

UFO: Aftermath is an isometric 3D turn based strategy game with a sci fi flavour, and Altar has plenty of good ideas in place to ensure this excites gamers, as Jiri added. "The alien threat has been a common theme for many years now, so we decided to use it as the background for our simultaneous turn-based strategy

game. When it dawned on us that we would have to start from scratch, we decided to rename the game to show gamers that we were working on a completely different game."

"In terms of the game's genre, we have nothing against one system or another, if it's right for the game play. Our previous title, Original War was an RTS, but for UFO: Aftermath we developed a unique turn-based system with simultaneous turns, which features, in our opinion, all of the best elements of both turn based and real time combat systems. It works like this: You give orders while the game is paused, to avoid the frantic rush of a real time system. While paused, you can give your troops very detailed orders, taking as much time as you like. Once you are finished, you simply tell the game to start. Once the game is underway, you can pause the game at any point to update or change your orders, and the game will automatically pause when important events occur, so that you may modify your plans accordingly."

The story runs something like this: the day after tomorrow, a giant spacecraft approaches the Earth. Silent, it hovers ominously over the world, and begins to release great clouds of spores into the upper atmosphere. Rapidly multiplying, the spores soon darken the skies, and before long obscure the sun completely. In later days, this period will be known as the 'Twilight'. Having reached critical mass in the skies, the spores began to rain down, and over the course of several days, clog the streets and bodies of water, smothering people in their homes, and burying animals in the wild. During the 'Nightfall', as it would come to be called, most of the higher life forms on the earth were wiped out. During the Twilight all human responses

developer: altar interactive  
publisher: tba  
distributor: tba  
release date: tba  
genre: strategy  
internet: [www.ufo-aftermath.com](http://www.ufo-aftermath.com)

were futile. Choosing caution over aggression, the governments of the world didn't realize how quickly the end could come, and were buried alongside those that they governed. A few, however, did survive, sealed in underground bases with stocks of food and oxygen.

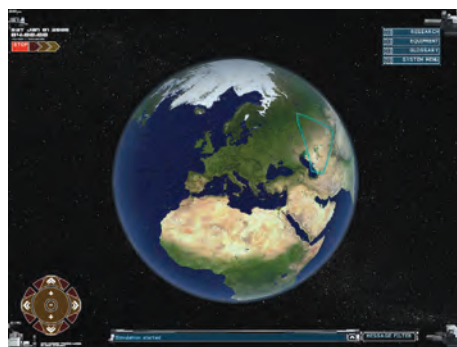
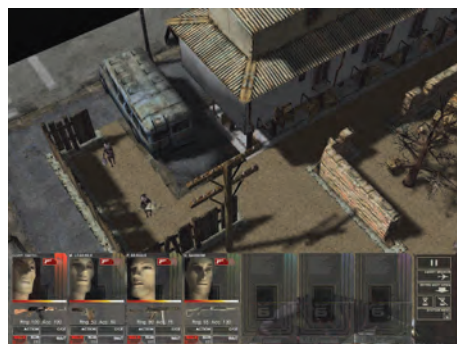
After several weeks, the spores seemed to have disintegrated, decomposing and settling into the soil. The world seemed safe again, for a time.

This is where you come in: you must gather together the remaining people of the planet, find out what has happened, and, if possible, get your revenge.

"Each of your troops has a set of statistics. Their skills are derived from these statistics, and each point that you put into any one of these attributes will have a noticeable effect on that soldier's skills. These attributes are - Strength, Agility, Dexterity, Willpower, Intelligence, and Perception. Raising Willpower should, for example, make the soldier more resistant to PSI influence, raising his Strength will make him able to



▲ When Fido followed Johnny home, Mother said he could definitely not keep it...





carry more, etc."

"This way you can, with enough experience, easily make your soldier into whatever you want them to be, either generalists or specialists. You can make snipers, medics, heavy weapons soldiers, or any mix of all of these skills and more. It is very important that you do so, in fact, as a group of random, average soldiers who are good at everything and excellent at nothing will get chewed up as the opponents become tougher."

There are two main portions of the game: In the

strategic portion, you must manage your bases, interceptions, and squads. Also important is the 'biomass' - a slimy, tangled mass creeping slowly across the whole of the world. Territory is equal to power in the game - the more you control, the better your interceptor coverage, the faster you can do research, and the more biomass you can repulse. Most of your time, however, will be spent in tactical missions, fighting on the ground against aliens and mutants for the control of territories. Once you control a territory, you can decide what type of base you want there - Research, Military, Manufacture or Biomass repulsion.

Each tactical mission takes place on its own, uniquely generated battlefield. Altar don't use templates, so each of the fully three dimensional game fields is totally different, so that you aren't stuck feeling like you're playing the same mission over and over, allowing for maximum replayability. That means there are no



levels to be completed, just an ever-changing number of missions you can resolve with your squad. There will be many types of missions, including investigating shot down UFO's, acquiring specific artefacts, gaining new territory in the geosphere, securing new bases, and protecting territory that you already possess from enemy incursion. The missions you do not choose remain available for some time and then they are auto-resolved.

"UFO: Aftermath offers several levels of difficulty, thus the amount of time necessary for finishing the game will vary. Progress in the game depends on research too, and the player's ability to gain information or alien artefacts can make game time shorter. We expect that UFO: Aftermath will take about 80 hours/100+ randomly generated missions to finish on the toughest level of difficulty."

There will be over 70 weapons altogether. At first, you will have access to normal weapons like the H&K MP5, AK-47, etc. As you capture alien equipment, you can research it to gain access to laser weapons, plasma weapons, and various PSI technologies.

Will UFO: Aftermath stand out from the pack? Altar thinks so. "There are several features which haven't been used together on the strategy games field



yet: simultaneous turn-based combat; randomly generated tactical missions; strong RPG elements; and frighteningly alien settings displayed in full 3D. These features make UFO: Aftermath an interesting title for every strategy game player."

Gaining territories and building bases is necessary for advancing in the game, bases are the only resource you have to manage, but they are very important. Also, there are flexible controls for zooming and rotating the view, so it's up to the player, which view fits him the best.

"UFO: Aftermath combines deep global strategy with tense tactical missions, weaving them together with a compelling storyline and a richly strategic, RPG-like approach to each soldier's attributes and skills. Prepare yourself for the greatest battle for the future of humankind."



▼ You go there, you there and I'll go here. Splitting up is always smart when facing an alien menace!



# highland warriors

To be blatantly honest, Novalogic's previous titles have been safe, but very uninspiring. Their next title, *Highland Warriors*, is a slight change in direction. Buying in outside titles and utilising new development teams could mean a new impetus for this publisher. Derek dela Fuente spoke with Robert Lauth (Project Co-ordinator) on this title, which brought some interesting answers.

SE-Games (formerly Soft Enterprises), a German developer, has over 10 years of gaming experience, along with a workforce of 30. Their portfolio includes a mixture of gaming genres but a strong emphasis on RTS. Although international success has eluded them, *Highland Warriors*, could be the game that accomplishes it for them. An interesting subject matter and one that those who love their history and strategy games will find doubly pleasurable, *Highland Warriors* covers, in huge parts, the popular time of the movie *Braveheart*. Moreover

the team has expanded the time frame and built the campaigns between the first foundation of Scotland (known as the kingdom of Alba) around 844 and the glorious victory of the Scots at Bannockburn in 1314 that lead to their freedom from the English crown.



Robert started with a summary of the game's best bits. "Highland Warriors offers a completely new and unprecedented depth of detail for real-time-strategy games with high resolution graphics, real-time shadows as well as a freely rotating camera with an incredible zoom. By that, the player gets much

better access to the setting. Similar to cinema movies he will directly be pushed emotionally into a different time. Moreover, *Highland Warriors* brings up unique game play features (like Master Craftsmen System, Changing seasons within a mission, real impact of formations within battles), which no other strategy game has offered before and which may totally change

players' tactical and strategic approaches within the game." The missions in *Highland Warriors* are mostly historically based, so you can re-enact great battles like Stirling Bridge, Falkirk and Bannockburn, political intrigues and feuding clans, the robbery of the Stone of Scone... and all ingrained in the personal history of leaders of the recent time. The team has also used artistic freedom to change some historical events throughout the flow of the missions to exalt the fun of the game! The 35 single player missions are divided into 4 campaigns, 8 Missions, plus 3 tutorials. The tutorials have no specific historical background - the aim is to familiarise the gamers with the handling and the features of *Highland Warriors*. The four campaigns all have historical backgrounds and so have most of the missions, as was explained.

## Campaign 1

The first campaign depicts the birth of Scotland. It deals with the four centuries of continuous fights between the Scots and the Picts. The

campaign starts off with the revolt of the Scots around Easter 834. Thereafter the King of the Scots, Alpin MacEochaid, led his people to the north to fight his enemies where he died. His son, Kenneth McAlpin, continued the efforts of his father and united both tribes around 844. He was crowned on the Stone of Scone as the common King of the Scots and Picts. His empire was known as kingdom of Alba.

## Campaign 2

The second campaign begins with the death of the Scottish King Alexander III in 1286 and ends with the annexation of Scotland through King Edward I in 1296. Between there lies the beginning ambitions of the English to gain Scotland, the power struggle of the Guardians, the robbery of the Stone of Scone and the English invasion. Here the gamer plays on the side of the English and King Edward I, Hammer of the Scots.

## Campaign 3

In the third campaign the player starts off on the side of William Wallace and his entourage. The campaign started with the struggle for freedom and the famous battle at Stirling Bridge. It ends with the defeat at Falkirk.

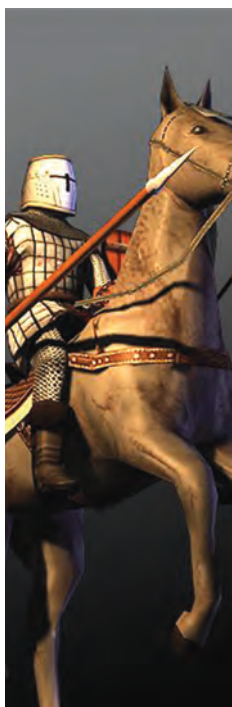
## Campaign 4

In this campaign the story heads towards its climax with the victorious battle at Bannockburn. It starts off with the attempt of Robert the Bruce to continue the efforts of William Wallace and David Moray. The first goal is to unite the feuding Scottish clans and then roll back the English occupying forces. The game play of the missions covers the typical build up and destroy sceneries as well as time pending, liberations and stealth issues. All missions have great variety and the skills of the units can be used as advantages. Furthermore, it is important within the game that the actions of the player mirror the flow of the missions. *Highland Warriors* has lots of character and terrain, as well as the type of detail demanded by strategy players. "We will overwhelm the player with a gaming experience that is outstanding in its



▼ Nifty red uniforms - those Scottish chicks should really dig these!





genre and which will absorb. For the first time in an RTS the player will get the feeling of being right in the setting amongst his units and not just standing above in a sterile perspective. But high detail is not the only focus of Highland Warriors: variety through the four completely different nations and clans and the special abilities of the units, not even mentioning the changing seasons that have a great influence in the tactic and actions on offer."

Troops, armies, units are what make a game like this. The different troops range from the common infantry and cavalry to heavy war machines and heroes. The damage system used distinguishes between the following categories; infantry short (the common infantry e.g. swordsman), infantry long (e.g. halberdier or spearman), long distance warriors (e.g. longbow man or crossbowman), cavalry, war machines and buildings. Each category has its advantages and disadvantages. e.g. infantry long is especially good against cavalry but poor against infantry short.

The military units can increase their capabilities in two ways: first most of the units can be upgraded. Along with the upgrades come higher skills and often new special attacks. e.g. only after the upgrade can the spearman use the ability to build a barrier against the cavalry by setting his spear. Second military units can gain experience throughout the battles and advance up to two levels. With this they get better skills. An exception makes the heroes - they already have their final states and abilities and can't be improved.

Military units must be produced in different buildings, like barracks, stables, and armouries. The exception here once again is the heroes. In the campaigns they can't be created as they are an element of the background story, and are available right at the start of a mission. In multiplayer heroes can be produced as normal units.

"There are great differences between the four nations. Each side has its own unique military units - and all the units have different capabilities. e.g. the merchant clan can corrupt enemy units and convince them to fight for their concern. The English longbow man can make a wide area attack that will increase their damage; the berserker of the warrior clan can accomplish an axe throw. Altogether you can find over 50 different special attacks and automatic passive abilities for the military units and heroes. Further on the all the units differ in their stats like damage, armour, movement speed, attack speed."

If you have a good knowledge of history then you will know which of the clans is

the most powerful - but you must consider that tactics on the day could have been wrong. For instance, the English have superior long distance fighters in the form of longbow men, superior war machines and the best cavalry. On the poor side they are very expensive. The warrior clan comes along with pure masses - they can create the cheapest units and flood the enemies. Also they have great supporting units like the flag bearer and one of the strongest units in the game - William Wallace. Though their units are cheap, they can't stand one on one against most of the enemy troops. The merchant clan owns strong infantry - especially long infantry - and can corrupt their enemies. And lastly the mystique clan can refer to their arcane powers. They may not have war machines at all but their druids and mages can crush whole armies!

"To ensure that Highland Warriors is well balanced we have employed several students that are very skilled in the RTS genre. Together with our employees, around 15 people are constantly testing Highland Warriors over months and giving each other hard multiplayer

matches to make sure it's fair with every nation. Beyond this we have engaged four of the world's best RTS players from the German [pg] clan who won a lot of international tournaments. They gave great feedback

on the game and especially the balancing. So the game will be perfectly balanced and people will gain no advantage by selecting the nations for historical reasons (which would be a disaster for the game play!).

Ok, let us break down a typical military unit. It's divided into nearly 40 different attributes like damage category, view distance, resource costs (food, wood, gold, ore, stone), housing space, production time, different move speeds due to seasons, attack range,

base hit points, base armour, magic points, attack speed, base damage, upgrade time, skills after upgrade, skills after levelling up, etc. Not forgetting that each of the over 50 special abilities comes along with totally different attributes. So we have a lot of values at hand to perfectly balance the game.

"The game's AI has been well worked into creating the perfect opposition and challenge. For example, certain resources are needed; they will scout the map and gather the missing resources. If they are too far away from the next warehouse they will build a new one. Military units will call for help if under attack, they will defend themselves if attacked, peasants will repair buildings if damaged and build new ones if destroyed. Also the AI will produce military units that are best for the different situations. The action and reaction of the AI is dependent on the difficulty level set. So only in the hardest difficulty AI will show its full power to challenge the human player. Besides the AI in the campaign, Highland Warriors also offers a skirmish mode. Here nearly every game will be a new daring experience because the AI will choose randomly between different behaviours like Rushing, Defensive or Attacking. Also here only full AI power will come along in the hardest difficulty."

To best use the 3D-terrain in a tactic manner you have the following terrain types that all affect not only the movement, but also the different skills of the units: hills, forest and plain terrain. Units will move faster downhill and slower uphill. And military units gain advantages and disadvantages due to the terrain type. For example, bowmen standing on a hill inflict more damage and can shoot further. In contrast, units will be less effective if fighting up hill. If a unit gains a bonus it is displayed in the GUI. The changing seasons also will affect the abilities of the units in decreasing the movement speed. The GUI (graphical user interface) was especially designed to meet both beginners, as well as advanced players', requirements and desires. It is extremely flexible and user friendly.

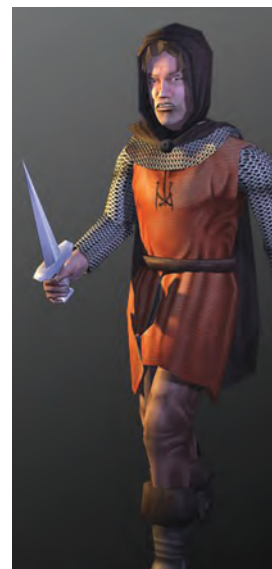
What was the team most proud of?

"Well there are so many things but it must be its great details, along with the changing seasons and, let's not forget, the variety of tactics."

Highland Warrior is indeed an impressive piece of code and the amount of detail and research cannot be stressed enough, even ensuring that historically authentic speech for the units has been implemented. Sound and animations are equally impressive, including environment sounds for summer and winter. All units have different animations 'swinging on two axis' and using a bone animation system! The story moreover is carried on by over 60 cut scenes. An epic...? Could be!



▲ "Hold still, McDougal... there's a big spider on yer head!"



# specnaz: project wolf

Already receiving plenty of press coverage, as well as publisher interest, another Eastern block developer from Bratislava (the capital of the Slovak Republic), Byte Software, is putting the final touches to SPECNAZ: Project Wolf.

SPECNAZ (read Spetsnaz) is a reference to the military name, Specialnogo Naznacheniya, which means Special Forces. The same term in Russian would refer to similar western special units, for example, SAS or Delta Force. SPECNAZ: Project Wolf offers an alternative 'cold war' view within a third person shooter as well as offering a host of really inventive ideas.

Utilising a small but skilled team, all their development resources, including their 3D engine, Amoeba, have been created in-house. Martin Hornak, head of development, was on hand to speak with Derek dela Fuente to explain.

"Everyone who sees the screenshots will get an idea about our engine. We have not included any technological features which are provided by modern graphic cards. We are presently creating and working on the Outdoor system, as well as gradually processing the Indoor system too. The main advantage of the engine is unlimited and free movement in a massive

play area. We have not limited it at all - it means that a player can go wherever he wants to go. Currently the engine is displaying stencilled shadows, which can be a burden for computers with lower specifications. This means we will not be able to avoid classical light maps, which will have to be further developed although we have not planned it."

Technicalities aside, this stealth-action shooter has many intriguing features within its design. In a market saturated with "anti-Russian" titles, the team tried a new approach - using Russian Special Forces as a basis.

"The campaigns will be divided into five countries (Iran, Yemen, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Myanmar). The purpose of the global campaign, as well as the whole game, is to retrieve nuclear bomb cases which

disappeared while being imported to Russia. The player will also cooperate with a Delta Force team in an international anti drug campaign in Myanmar. All of these operations will certainly be top secret, which relates to the overall setting of the game. The secret Russian army project, Wolf, is also involved in the game. A player will perform the following operations in the missions: eliminate, destroy, rescue, retrieve, install, recon. The operations will be divided into night and day operations, of course."

"One of our innovative ideas is based on the involvement of a trained army wolf in conflict. The wolf will be helping the player in about 60 per cent of the missions - the player will be using the wolf's abilities in order to accomplish the mission successfully. The wolf will understand simple commands and he will be wearing a skeletal system with attached weapon systems, which will be at the player's disposal during the whole mission. The player will be able to choose the army equipment for the wolf

himself before the mission starts. He can either attach to the skeleton, one antitank mine and four grenades or four anti infantry mines and two grenades and so on - the player can decide for himself. He will be able to

send the equipped wolf into the enemy base and distribute the arsenal quietly or instruct the wolf to eliminate the guards quietly before entering the base. This sort of play dynamic will guarantee variety."

SPECNAZ is designed with a single-player-viewpoint. At this point Byte is not thinking about the possibility that a player would be able to watch the action from the eyes of another team member and the only

character that will have a camera will be the wolf. The player will find out the number of the team members at his disposal at the briefing before he enters the action. Abilities and skills of the team members will depend on the type of the mission. At this moment, RPG elements are purely speculative.

SPECNAZ has a lot on offer and playability should not be overlooked. The team is thoughtful and creative, and love their job... and only want to create a quality title. Martin summed up the team and game, "We are a young company, about a year old. However our experience with gaming is rich. I have completed three projects and I have worked on others. All our experience will be applied in the new project, which we are putting all our hopes on."

## guns and stuff

Weapons are always a focus in these types of games. Although the team is creating weapons based on the real thing they do not have real models to work with. On the other hand there has been much written about the weapons and this is the source of their information. They will also incorporate External ballistics and Terminal ballistics too.



## the ways thing go

The progression within SPECNAZ is linear. This concerns the campaign which the player is involved in - missions are more freeform, though, with more choice open to the player. It means that by varied management of the wolf and the members of his team, the player can complete the different missions in various ways.



▲ "Here, Wolf! Come on boy... Here boy! Now where is that damn animal? I can't see him anywhere!"



**developer:** digital reality  
**publisher:** monte cristo  
**distributor:** wwe [011] 462-0150  
**release date:** late 2003  
**genre:** rts  
**internet:** www.montecristogames.com

Monte Cristo is possibly best known as being that small French publisher which has released instantly forgettable titles like *Casino Tycoon* or *Factory Tycoon*, both of which are strangely addictive if you start playing them.

However to the large majority of gamers, titles from this little-known company are dismissed without a second thought.

The problem for any emerging publisher, and Monte Cristo have been around since the late 90s, is trying to get your name in the spotlight and mix it with the big boys. With the recent acquisition of an impressive title, which every filmgoer would have heard about, Monte Cristo is now looking for some attention and a little bit more respect. Come the end of the year we shall see *Platoon*, a real-time 3D strategy based on Oliver Stone's harrowing portrait of the war in Vietnam, which was released way back in the cinema in 1986, and was widely acclaimed as the most important Vietnam movie ever produced.

Now, sixteen years later, *Platoon* on the PC will go a

step further than anyone could have envisaged by capturing all of the uncertainty, drama, sweat, fear and horror of this Oscar-winning classic in a masterpiece of real-time strategy gaming.



Reading through, you may find some of the links and end results a tad spurious in titling it "Platoon", but it offers as much as any other game working off the basis of another media's success and popularity. Can this French publisher cut the mustard and really do the title justice? Derek dela Fuente was given the opportunity to chat with Tamás Daubner, Director of Marketing and Production at

Digital Reality, the team behind the creation of *Platoon*, who are based in Hungary, famed for the *Imperium Galactica I and II* and *Haegemonia* titles.

*Platoon's* game-play focuses on the 1st Airborne Cavalry Division, from the early days of the Vietnam conflict in 1965 to the height of the war - and rapidly mounting casualties - in 1968.

Starting out as Sergeant Martin Lionsdale, newly wed and newly recruited, players will need to learn from their

experiences of the cruel jungle quickly to be able to succeed in their missions and rise in rank. Ultimately, they'll be responsible for a full platoon of specialised 'grunts', comprised of riflemen, snipers, scouts, machine gunners, grenadiers, engineers and commandos.

Getting the game right, using a host of additional material, ensuring that this is more than just a game with a big name, is but one area the development team is working towards, as was explained. "Our main focus is giving back the feeling of the movie, not doing a game after the movie. We started out aiming to recreate the ambience of Vietnam in a game. Therefore, we used a huge bank of photos, videos, diaries and data that enabled us to give back the look of Vietnam. The scenarios were also built following real-life events and battles. The tactics and the AI used in the creation of the software were the fruits of our own imagination after reading through some diaries and seeing many films about Vietnam - with 'Platoon' obviously being the most important one."

"When the movie 'Platoon' came out in 1986, I was completely shocked by it. It amazed me, and I had goose bumps all over my skin after leaving the cinema. This was really an unexpected experience, an unsafe journey, an untold tale of some sort... and I certainly memorized two names: Oliver Stone and Willem Dafoe. Since then, these men have a place in my hall-of-fame of movie stars."

"We were very proud and honoured that MGM agreed to give us the licence. It is a tremendous award for all our hard work, and it means that the game meets the high standard set by the movie and has recreated this fascinating atmosphere. Given these particular circumstances, we simply had to get the job done after Monte Cristo had signed the agreement."

Many will remember the film as being graphic and violent, and it shocked many, but a number of compromises are being made which may displease some. However, game-play has to be paramount! "Platoon's most important task is to give players the joy of playing. So you must enjoy yourself while playing it! That's why we took out violence, gore and bloody scenes from our game. This could have been real, but it would have ashamed us all to let players play such a brutal game. I think we found the balance between being dramatic (with our music and ambient effects you'll have scary moments, I'm sure!) and not being aggressive. The game will have a full-motion video sequence as its introduction. On top of that, you will have in each and every mission the chance to see several in-game cinematics when something important happens. (This will convey the right ambience.)"

In *Platoon*, each infantryman has his own unique personality and reacts to orders, situations and environments accordingly.

The lush 3D terrain, containing



▼ Ancient temple ruins... a perfect place for an ambush...





dense elephant grass, rice paddies and jungle, and the dynamic weather effects, including wind, rain and monsoons, affect each soldier's speed and combat abilities and also enemy detection through both sound and line of sight. There are over a dozen talented people working towards the same atmosphere as the film, but not mirroring the story, as many will remember it. In effect, it's the team's own story, along with their own characters. However, there are several elements of the movie integrated into the game by means of cinematics. There are also some of the movie characters who appear as non-player characters, and there might be some of the original music (to be confirmed). It is as if Sergeant Elias and Sergeant Lionsdale were in the same division, only they could well be fighting only a few miles away one from another. And who knows, maybe their paths will cross in some missions...

There are over 400 motion-captured animations recorded in a Hungarian studio's offices, with professional talent and equipment incorporated into the game utilising numerous 'moves', as different soldiers move differently and unique situations deserve unique movements, which will ensure a high degree of authenticity. Sadly, no footage from the film will be used.

Platoon is all about tactical acumen, purely focused on real-time tactics, meaning that you start each mission with a set of units and weaponry. You have to play every scenario with the team you possess. Once in a mission, events will be fixed but, of course, the AI could react differently, causing you some pain and more trouble!

Strong game-play and story are the essence of what is on offer, reflected in the fact that you'll play your men like you would in any role-playing game. A strong bond will develop between you and your heroes. No micromanagement exists in Platoon, so you can concentrate on the story and its missions. It was important to the development team that the action could be stopped at any moment: issue new orders, then restore the flow of time. "As the game is slanted towards tactical game play, it possesses many factors that are transparent to the player (weapon specifics,

defence bonuses on terrains and so on; however, these factors are visualized). Line of sight and field of view are key aspects of our game. Both of them will create a unique playing experience!"

Platoon features a scalable level of detail system to suit all systems above PIII 600 MHz or equivalent,

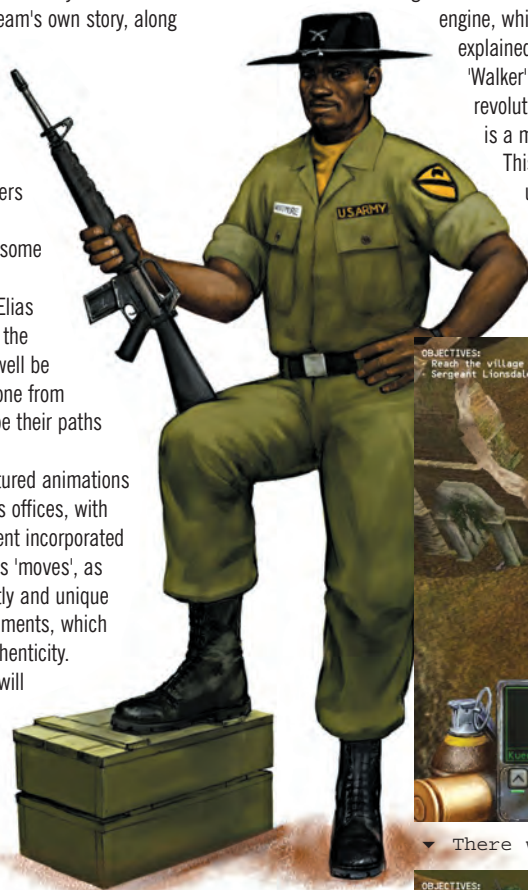
along with the revolutionary game engine, which was briefly explained as follows: "Our 'Walker' engine is called revolutionary because it is a multipurpose one. This same engine is used in our other game, Haegemonia, a space RTS. This is why this

visual effects, MoCap support and high-resolution textures. Looking at the screenshots we issued in September you'll have to see for yourself that the game really looks awesome!"

Along with its distinguished looks, also present is well created artificial intelligence. The Viet Cong's AI reacts to hearing or seeing its enemy. The team is particularly proud of the sound, as all weaponry used in the game possesses hearing ranges! This is something really extraordinary in an RTS. Besides the AI, the player has about a dozen commands to choose from and all react intelligently to given situations. The player's units don't have AI, it is up to you, the player, to fully control them and be responsible for their life or death.

Tamas summed up the game in a sentence -

"Immersive real-time strategy set in realistically modelled settings of the Vietnam War for the first time ever in gaming history".



▼ There were these two Irish guys, Mick and Paddy...



engine is revolutionary: it's so versatile. We have DirectX 8.1 support with all the latest instalments (pixel shaders, material use, vertex shading, etc.), a powerful level of detail system with an excellent built-in editor, particle editor with excellent

## devastation

**Huge corporations have taken over governments, and rule with an iron fist, relying on elite corporate enforcers, or Pacification Squads, to do their dirty work. A small but growing Resistance has been formed to combat the corporations, and you play the new leader of a group of these 'disloyalists'. You'll meet up with many sidekicks, travel the world, battle regiments of PacSquad troopers, sabotage corporate operations, and uncover a corporate conspiracy that threatens what's left of the ravaged world.**

Devastation is a new team-based first-person shooter (FPS) built on a heavily modified next-generation Unreal Engine. Set on a post-apocalyptic Earth, Devastation pits teams of rebel gang leaders, street fighters, mercenaries, and ex-military operatives together against armies of corrupt, high-tech corporate police in a battle to win control of a devastated world. Devastation is to be released early in 2003 by HD Interactive, which is now, in their own words, the most successful independent publisher in Europe. Derek de la Fuente took the opportunity to talk with Digitalo's Vic DeLeon, the project's Senior Producer. Digitalo satellite offices were once spread out around

the world, in Japan and Sweden as well as the US. Earlier last year they closed up shop overseas and moved their other two halves together, relocating their remote employees to their new Fort Lauderdale, Florida, office. Many of the best guys on the Devastation team came directly from the mod community. Two little known facts about this team: they worked on Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone last year, as well as the Unreal Tournament add-on pack, which was probably the most exciting thing the team had worked on. Having learned much from their projects, their expertise and knowledge marks Devastation down as a very interesting title!

Devastation has a dynamic tactical component that allows the gamer to decide how much control to exert over non-player character team-mates, from giving individual commands to giving no commands at all - game players can coordinate an 8-person attack, or go in guns blazing - it's their choice. With 32

different areas, more than 30 different weapons, numerous multiplayer game styles and over-the-top graphics, Devastation offers FPS fans a captivating experience. Vic explained the single player campaign. "The single player game is very substantial and although it prepares players for the kind of action and combat they will face in the multiplayer campaigns, it stands on its own. We did not want it to just be a tutorial of sorts. The story is presented through mission briefings, in game and action cut scenes, and through twenty massive levels set in four different territories. The game play is still in the balancing stages, so it's almost impossible to give an accurate answer, but right now the average range is between 15 to 25 hours, depending on difficulty and game setting. For example, the ability to play in Arcade or Simulation mode gives players some nice variations and increased game play." There is no getting away from the fact that any game using Unreal Technology gets a lot of attention and Devastation is no exception. The fact that

the Digitalo team has been working with the Unreal engine for several years does ensure quality and innovation and already they have invested a significant amount of time in learning the tools and tricks of the engine. Although starting Devastation on

an earlier build of the Unreal Engine, it has recently been upgraded to the absolute latest version (often nicknamed Warfare).

There is also constantly merging code as Epic releases it to their licensees, and presently Devastation is running the same version of the Unreal Engine as UT2003!

"As for additions and modifications, we have written our own systems that would allow us to do what we needed to develop Devastation the way we wanted in the first

place. We rewrote and modified many of the components and added entire new ones. We've made dramatic changes to the skeletal system, which allows for full parametric blending of multiple layers of animation. This allows us to do a lot of neat things like have players actually show a certain degree of 'true aim', so you can tell where they are looking and shooting much more precisely. It also makes the dynamic transitions between our animations look much better and smoother, which is important considering all the time we've invested in motion-captured data for the majority of our movements. Aside from this, we've done a lot of work on our particle and special effects system, which includes the latest Unreal particles. In addition to integrating the MathEngine physics, we've also added a lot of our own world physics."

The environment the player experiences is completely



▼ Proof that a handgun can be a pain in the neck



interactive, where everything can be destroyed or manipulated - e.g. use garbage in the streets to set traps, or pick up broken bottles and slash your enemies. The use of sound in the game is dynamic as well so it can be manipulated or muffled to create diversions or to move around stealthily. What innovations have been conjured up for this title? "One cool innovation is the hacking element. In the later stages of the game, your team's primary focus is overtaking the enemy encampments and destroying their regeneration devices in order to stop the onslaught. To do this, you need to hack into city-owned mainframes to retrieve security codes. You need to



▲ If you miss at this range, give up. Just put the mouse away, and shut down the PC...

implement strategies to cover and suppress the enemy while doing this, like having your NPC team-mates protect you. You then use the stolen codes to disable the enemy defence perimeters, infiltrate their bases, and destroy their regeneration machines. Once you do this, you're able to wipe out the hordes of Troopers without them coming back at you."

The advanced artificial intelligence controls enemies and team-mates with micro-behaviours and heightened awareness. One of the goals working on Devastation's AI was to move away from trying to simulate human

players playing on servers, to emulating what a real-life human would do in our world. The idea is that with this approach, a player will be able to truly enjoy the single-player experience without feeling as though they're just playing a multiplayer game with bots. That means no enemies strafe-walking while getting ready to rocket-jump to that next ledge... Instead, you'll see them engage you when appropriate, trying to take cover, possibly running to get reinforcements, or just plain freaking out and running away. The farther you make it through the single-player missions, the more intelligent



▲ Upset with poor album sales, Eminem took the only course of action left to him...

to move out and complete most objectives with very little help from you."

Multiplayer modes include CTF, Deathmatch and Team DM, as well as introducing a brand new game style called Territories. The set up is that you have two bases, yours and your enemy's, and inside each base is a destructible spawn point. You and your team will need to coordinate attacks on the enemy base and its defences. In order to get into the enemy base, you'll have to hack your way into their mainframe and get their security codes, relay the information to your team

and bring down your enemy's defences. Of course, the enemy team will be trying to do the same thing to your base! A lot more info on this mode was forthcoming but we will not spoil your fun by telling all! Asked what the team's fav weapons are makes for interesting reading.



enemies you will encounter, along with more diversified behaviours.

"Your AI team-mates play an important role if you want to progress through the single-player missions, especially on the harder difficulty settings. A couple of them will always prefer to cover you, some will hang back and make sure to defend your base camp, while others have aggressive personalities and tend to head out on their own. Of course, you always have options of explicitly giving them orders if you feel the need, and if you really wanted to, but it's quite possible for your team mates

"The P-Laser is a very cool weapon. The effects of shooting it have a great visual quality, and it is a very deadly weapon. The 'gibs' it creates are incredible. Another we really like is the antique machine gun, which has great report and kick, and it just 'feels' so damn good. But the coolest, if not very deadly, is the 2x4 wooden plank! Smacking an orderly-trooper in the Asylum just makes you feel like Jack Nicholson in a new 'One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest'." Finishing, Vic told of the aspect of the game the team is most proud of. "I would have to say it's the depiction of these real-world locales, combined with our unique band of misfits. The overall feeling you get from these twisted environments and bizarre characters together is indescribable. They are not your typical characters; some are odd, paranoid, loners, and others are reckless freaks bordering on insanity. These are the troublemakers, criminals, and castaways, and they reflect the desperation of a future with no hope. They're the underdogs, and all they have going for them is their little rebellion and you, their leader."



# THINK IT'S HARMLESS FUN? THINK AGAIN.

Copying PlayStation games is the same as stealing. If you buy copied games YOU ARE SUPPORTING CRIME. If you copy PlayStation games you could end up with a criminal record, fines of hundreds of thousands of Rands, and a jail sentence. Don't be fooled by crooks who tell you that the game is "NTSC" or "cloned, not copied". If the flip side of the disc is not black for PSone or Metallic blue of PS2, then it is a pirate copy.

Legitimate PlayStation & PSone games are black CD's. If the CD is not black, it's a counterfeit. For PlayStation@2, dark metallic blue backed-disc indicate legitimate CD based PS2 games, whilst PS2 DVD based games will be silver on the back, but will have 6 PlayStation holograms around the inner circle of the disc if held in the light. Buy the original, play the game and keep it honest.

If you have information that could assist us in our fight against piracy, please contact SAFACT

**COPYING PLAYSTATION GAMES IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE**

SAFACT - SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT - (011) 886 3824

## award ceremony



### NAG Editors Choice

This game or product is the pick of the bunch for the month as it has that special something which makes it stand out from the rest.



### NAG Award of Excellence

Games which score over 90% are given this award. The ultimate achievement for a game. It represents an automatic purchase if you enjoy the type of game on offer.



### NAG Award of Merit

Games which score over 85% and below 90% are given this award. A game scoring here is good in every way but lacks that something extra that separates it from classic status.

### LOTR: The Two Towers [PS2]

"So, instead of riding on the film's obvious success, this title has served as something of a hype-machine, adding to the frenzy surrounding the release of the film."

Shryke

91%



### Pikmin [GC]

"Naturally this makes Pikmin a mature game, since children do not possess the vocabulary you need to express how it feels when half your army drowns unwittingly."

Priest

90%



### Warioland 4 [GBA]

"It features the familiar jump-here-get-that-bounce-on-that-ugly-thing style of play from the series, but with a few twists."

Priest

89%

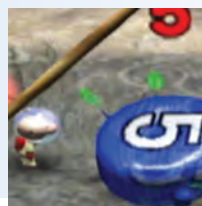
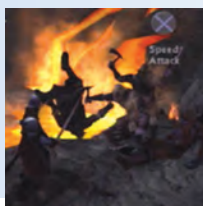


### Arx Fatalis [PC]

"... even if you could lock-pick the gates of Heaven, this doesn't change the fact that if you fight like a dead fish tied to a rock at the bottom of a pond, you're going to get your ass kicked."

Priest

86%



## NAG Review Rigs supplied by:

Your Components Solution Provider

### SPECIFICATION

Intel P 2.0 GHz 512KB  
Gigabyte P4 845PE ATX Motherboard  
Leadtek MYVIVO TI 4600  
ViewSonic P90f 19" Monitor  
TwinMOS 1 GHz RAM DDR 266  
Maxtor 60 GB ATA133 7200 HHD  
AOpen CD ROM  
AOpen P4 Black Tower Chassis  
Logitech Cordless Desktop



**GIGABYTE**  
TECHNOLOGY

**ViewSonic**

**AOpen**

**Leadtek**

**TwinMOS Technologies**

**Maxtor**



**rectron**

www.rectron.net

2003 doesn't  
have to be **all DOOM** and gloom

Baldur's Gate  
**DARK ALLIANCE**

JAMES CAMERON'S  
**DARK ANGEL**  
MOTION PICTURE

**JUDGE  
DREDD**  
VERSUS  
DEATH

**The Incredible Hulk**  
**The Lost Vikings**  
**Run Like Hell**

**The Fast and the Furious**  
**Battle Star Galactica**  
**Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance**

**Judge Dredd**  
**Half-Life 2**

**StarCraft: Ghost**  
**Dark Angel**  
**X-Files**

**Homeworld 2**  
**The Hobbit**

**Counter-Strike: Condition Zero**  
**SWAT: Urban Justice**

**The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Ring**  
**Malice**

**SWAT: Global Strike Team**  
**Space Quest**  
**Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter**

PlayStation.2



Distributed by

**Com/tek**  
The Systems Distributor

# lord of the rings: fellowship of the ring

The world of JRR Tolkien, namely Middle Earth, has inspired many things. This father of modern fantasy introduced readers the world over to a whole new idea, a world dream-like and fantastic. The result has been movies, artwork and now even a PC title based on his work...

"Prepare to play the greatest story ever written... from the beginning!" That is the rather snotty closing comment from the blurb on the back of Vivendi's Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring box. Here is a game that claims to be the "official" game, based on the literary works of JRR Tolkien - a rather savage jab at EA's Lord of the Rings title, which is based on the film releases, and begins with the second film, treating the first as a few prequel missions.

One thing I cannot stand is arrogance and, being a fan of Tolkien, another is the Tolkien purist. Just as a short aside here: Tolkien purists (like the Tolkien Foundation) were the one group who spoke out very loudly against the creation of the Lord of the Rings movie trilogy, saying that Tolkien never believed film would do his works justice. Sure, back when Tolkien lived, film was barely out of black and white. But the man never knew what technology would bring, and would probably be thrilled to see what was created from his works. However, the Tolkien purists stuck to their guns, because of Tolkien's "wishes," and opposed the making

of the film for quite some time. How utterly anal.

This is a game created by Tolkien purists. Their big claim to fame is the fact that this game is based on the book, not Hollywood's vision of it. That's fair enough, I suppose, but let's be a little realistic here - changing anything from one form of media to the other will result in what can only be called interpretation. So, when the opening dialogue of the game does not match the book word for word, does that not make these guys guilty of the exact same thing they accused Hollywood of doing? I know that this probably isn't important to this review, but you just have to stamp out hypocrisy wherever it grows. Anyway... I managed, with great effort, to put aside any such biases (something which years of reviewing taught me to do) and got on with playing the game.

Black Label Studios took on the task of recreating Tolkien's vision with great gusto, and the fruits of their labours are very evident. They went at everything, really. In great detail. So much detail, in fact, that a whole bunch of the opening scenes have been hacked out (like Bilbo's birthday party) and great dollops of other things never mentioned in the book have been slammed in. Hmmm. Official, eh?

What was created by the development team is basically a third person adventure in the Middle Earth setting. The player controls

Frodo Baggins through his adventures in trying to return the Ring of Power to the fires of Mount Doom - the only place where this potentially evil device can be destroyed. Frodo is accompanied by a number of other characters, well known from the books (and the film) like Peregrine Took, Samwise Gamgee, Gandalf the Grey and Aragorn - Gandalf and Aragorn are also available for play, at certain times. The tale begins (more or less, give or take an important scene or two) where the Fellowship of the Ring (the first part of the Lord of the Rings trilogy) starts,

developer: black label studios  
publisher: vivendi  
distributor: comstek (0800) 600-557  
price: R 329.00  
genre: adventure  
internet: www.universalinteractive.com



and ends more or less where it ends. It's all the extra bits in the middle that I can't figure out. See, try as I might (and I did even flip through my copy of Lord of the Rings to check this) I couldn't find the bits where Frodo had to help this guy sort out his mill, and that guy find his tobacco, or get this thing from that kid...



▲ These fools follow you around everywhere... wish they'd just go away, because they do nothing anyway





▲ Big dog, small hobbit - sadly, if you play the game at all, chances are the twerp will survive

▼ Pretty graphics. Just a pity about the game play...



perhaps I didn't read between the lines that Tolkien so lovingly penned. Or perhaps - which is more likely the case - this title is more loosely based on the book than the developers would have us think. Sure, the major events correspond, but there is so much unimportant drivel added in in-between! It's not even a bad story - but is it Lord of the Rings, as accurate as they claim it to be? I don't think so.

Before this review turns ugly (although it might be a bit too late), I am going to move onto the technical aspect of the game. I have to. The "interpretation" story just makes me too angry. As stated before, the game is basically a 3D third person adventure game, with a nifty option to change to first person as well. And a rather pretty one at that. The graphics are nothing to be sneezed at... I have seen some better, but I have seen far more that are a lot worse! The settings are vibrant, large

and intricately detailed, creating a true suspension of disbelief for the player. Which is good, because you need some kind of distraction from the play style required to take on this title.

Basically, the game works like this. You are told to find or do things. If something glows, pick it up. If it doesn't glow, ignore it. Don't try interact with the environment too much, because non crucial interaction produces no results - rocks thrown at water or glass, for example, disprove popular physics theory by bouncing off of these normally fragile surfaces. On the good side, the controls are pretty easy to use, and very responsive. The soundtrack, too, is quite pleasant. Until any of the characters speak, that is, because the game features tiresome and rather unenthusiastic voice acting. Perhaps it is the arrogance of the developer that has me so riled up. But, in the real world, if you talk the talk, you better be capable of walking the walk - not falling on your arse after three doddering steps. What was a brilliant concept, an idea with massive potential, has turned out into a game so average that it hurts. It's sad but true, folks, that the ones with the biggest mouths fall the hardest.

Perhaps I am too much of a purist (although I did enjoy the films.) Perhaps I am being too picky by expecting people to deliver on claims that they make. Maybe my expectations were too high - but I wasn't the one who put them way up there.

As far as this title is concerned, let the buyer beware. You may love it. But, realistically, it is a rather sad attempt, in my humble opinion, and doesn't live up to even half the hype that it got. Now, if you will excuse me, there's a game on the PS2 that I want to go play...



▼ Hi, I'm short...



Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium III 600 MHz	Pentium 4 1.2 GHz
128MB RAM	256MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	00 x CD ROM
32MB D3D Video Accelerator	64MB D3D Video Accelerator
800 MB HDD	800 MB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Reasonable graphics	Official?
Nice music	Lame game play
	Terrible voice acting
AT A GLANCE	
This "official" version of the Lord of the Rings is so over-hyped and full of hot air it's not funny. Bland 3rd person adventure mixes with so-so graphics, horrid voice acting and a heavily modified script to make a game that is rather disappointing. Beware of this title - if you can, try before you buy!	
<b>score 58</b>	

# arx fatalis

For a week after playing Arx Fatalis, I went around making symbols in the air to invoke special powers that will enable me to control people. So far it hasn't done anything, except I poked someone in the eye once, and the Editor insists I start seeing his shrink. Okay, maybe I should start wearing pants again, too...

Once upon a time there was a world. The sun that heated this world decided to go out. So the people of the world decided to join together and move underground, creating a vast underground world to live in. This is the world of Arx. And in Arx you'll find them all - Ogres, humans, goblins, dwarfs, trolls, rat-men and then some. It's a huge melting pot that would make the most zealous Rainbow-Nation advocate green with envy. Or at least it was, because before long the old problems arose again, and soon everyone lived in separate areas. And it's in the world of Arx that you find yourself waking up in a goblin jail, with no memory, no weapons, and most importantly - no pants.

## The soul of a Wanderer

I've been waiting for Arx Fatalis for a while. Morrowind was great, but it felt more like an opportunity squandered, and Bethesda didn't really make use of what potential they really had with that game. In the mean time Arkane Studios were showing everyone movies and screenshots of Arx, a potential contender for the throne of first person RPG title. When they released the demo a few months ago, it was a must-play on my list. And finally getting my hands on the full game, the only real disappointment is that JoWood isn't in the country so that you local gamers can get your grubby paws on this one. To stop something before it starts right here, though - Arx Fatalis is not an RPG. An RPG proposes lots of sub quests and a more open-ended gameworld. Instead,



Arx is a quest, an adventure if you will. There is a set path through the world and your epic story. You can't really take initiative and do things your own way by killing anything you want. Okay, you can, but this ends up sabotaging the actual game story, and soon you'll be wandering around the world aimlessly. Keeping with the story can be tough, but the map goes a long way in showing you where you should go and do stuff.

The RPG element comes in with the stats you have, but an RPG this does not make - Hero's Quest, anyone? You have your main statistics such as stamina and dexterity - four in total. You also have twelve skills to improve when you level up. These range from improving your melee combat or magic skills to picking locks or spotting hidden things. These skills are much more vital to the game, though, than one would think, and they actually create the character more than anything else. For instance, spotting hidden areas easily means more loot, and more importantly, vital equipment and runes.

## Back to the quest...

Before I explain the game system more, though, back to the world of Arx and its colourful inhabitants. It takes little to figure out that amidst all the tension between the races, there are some who have their own, more devious plans. One of these groups plan to raise a dark god that they worship. This seems to be a common pastime for people of the fantasy world. But I suppose that if you don't have the options of creating thermal-nuclear bombs or nasty civilisation-ending viruses, a dark deity of un-ending evil isn't a bad move. Of course, these things aren't just handed to you on a plate - you'll need to do some of the proverbial questing to find stuff out. And as with all questing, this means talking to people, learn something, go somewhere, beat something up, and learn something new. Because of Arx Fatalis' rather linear approach, it's safer to just do everything that comes your way. At the least it means becoming more powerful and being able to beat up even bigger things.

As you progress, you'll meet more creatures, get more equipment, learn more stuff, and so on. I don't need to draw a picture here (except maybe for the Editor. He so loves his crayons) [Hey, you're the one running around with no pants and a tiny wand, Ed]. The game doesn't mould around your character, which is a main complaint about Morrowind as well. No matter what route you take, the story doesn't change at all. For instance, even if you could lock-pick the gates of Heaven, this doesn't change the fact that if you fight like a dead fish tied to a rock at the bottom of a pond, you're

developer: arkane studios

publisher: jowood

distributor: tba

price: \$ 39.00 [±R 350.00][excluding shipping]

genre: adventure rpg

internet: www.arxfatalis.com



going to get your butt kicked.

Of course, this is a quest, not an RPG, so I won't get too picky about that. But this is just another illustration of how linear PC RPGs are in the end, regardless.

## Rumble in the underground jungle

Okay, granted it's linear and not extremely varied. But Arx Fatalis is still a lot of fun and very immersive, because everything else is pretty damn good, at the least. The first thing you notice is the interface. The game uses a first-person view that can switch between using a cursor and mouse-look. In the cursor mode you can still look around, but by moving the cursor to the edge of the screen. Since the game uses the traditional WASD configuration, you can move at all times. In cursor mode you interact with the world, picking up objects, talking to people, throwing rocks at pedestrians...

Right-click and you are in mouse-look mode. Right-click again and you're in cursor mode - it doesn't get any simpler than this, and I'm hoping other developers take note. Combat mode is a tap of the Tab key away. This sets you into mouse-look, but you also brandish whatever weapon you are carrying. There is no real skill to combat. The longer you hold your attack button in, the harder you'll hit. Your weapon is usually your strength plus a number. And if you can get behind an enemy, you have the advantage that he can't hit you. So this means running in, hitting them, dodging out and to the side, and running back in again. Simple as this is, though, it can get tricky, but not frustrating. If you can't kill something, chances are your character just lacks a level or two. Your armour and weapon takes





▲ With crickets like these, no-one gets to sleep in Arx... especially not small dogs

wear and tear, and when something gets damaged, its icon changes colour.

The most innovative part of the game, though, is the magic. Using the approach Black & White did, you have to physically cast a spell. This involves tracing runes with your mouse. Activate a sequence of Runes and the spell is charged, ready to be cast. Runes are all over the world of Arx, and collecting them is very important if you want to be a powerful magic user. As you get runes, more spell options become available, and as you level up more rune combinations reveal themselves. Your spellbook shows what runes to trace to charge a spell. Of course, making arcane symbols in the middle of the air with your finger while a horde of snake-women are racing towards you is more likely to make you look like a utter git (and a soon-to-be-dead one at that) than a powerful mage, since the spell method means you need to be rather precise on how you cast runes, else the spell won't work. Being in a panic for your life doesn't help. So the game allows you to pre-cast three spells and keep them in handy, one click, reach. Spells, as usual, vary from combat spells to utility spells to things that ultimately seem rather useless.

Other game dynamics include the need to eat. You collect food throughout the game, and our hero might occasionally moan that he needs to be fed. Since you can't give him raw food (and you'll get a lot of that), you need to cook stuff. This simply means dropping

stuff into a fire. Of course, if there is no fire, find a pile of wood and cast a fire spell - which ignites things. Then settle back and feed yourself burnt fish. It's a hero's life...

#### Mind your head

Considering Arx is built underground, don't expect any wide-open vistas where buffalo roam and soldiers sleep on their horses. The game has a very claustrophobic feel - especially outside, and it's always weird to leave a building and feel as if you've just gone inside and not outside. A lot of times you'll find yourself in caverns, or small, panic-inducing tunnels. 'Dungeon' crawling is a big aspect of the game, though that's just because everything is underground. The architecture varies, though, and you'll see a wide variety of places inside the world. Arkane took a chance here by taking a less-traditional route for a gameworld, and still pulling it off nicely.

Of course, it also works nicely because it looks so good. Arx Fatalis, in all its underground gloom and doom, looks great, in a creepy, I'm-100-feet-under kind of way. The stonework in some areas might feel repetitive, but then again, we are in underground caverns and structures here. If you don't

have a card with Hardware T&L support, get one, since it makes a huge difference. The character animations are also good, but not terrific. The modelling is nicely done, though, and it's easy to recognise a species from a distance by their outline and how they move. Sound-wise you can't be disappointed either, especially if you have the EAX running. The underground world echoes with sounds of wind, dripping water, small creatures, and conversations from patrols or other groups. The creature sounds are well



▲ After a few unfortunate incidents, soldiers stopped putting "stab me" signs on rookies' backs...

done, putting aside the fear that the developer messed up the English translation - something that happens all too often with European games.

Arx Fatalis is a decent quest game in which a lot of thought and design as gone. If you liked Morrowind, or any game in which quests meets ugly creatures and big swords, get Arx Fatalis.



Your Components Solution Provider	
rectron	
www.rectron.net	
all games reviewed on rectron machines	
REVIEWED BY	
James "No Pants" Francis	
MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium II 500 MHz	Pentium III 900 MHz
64 MB RAM	256MB RAM
16 x CD ROM	32 x CD ROM
32MB D3D Video Accelerator	64MB D3D Video Accelerator
750 MB HDD	750 MB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Detailed world	Linear
Innovative interface	Confusing at times
Immersive	
AT A GLANCE	
Arx Fatalis is a gem, and bound to be a sleeper hit among RPG and adventure enthusiasts. Despite some flaws, such as a linear approach for the story, it's got more than enough in its favour, including an excellent interface and spell system.	
score 86	

# prisoner of war

If you're thinking, "Oh hell no, not another World War II game", you would be only half right. This is a different approach to the WW2 scenario, and entails you taking control of Lewis Stone, an American pilot, shot down in enemy territory and taken to a prisoner of war camp. He decides staying put is not an option and starts to plan his escape. It is up to you, the player, to guide him through his escape attempts.

Before I even go into analyzing this game, I must give the developers the proverbial pat on the back for trying something different. I think it is worth a look purely for that reason. It also felt like a partial return to the way adventure games were handled in the past. The puzzle / action approach is a unique way of looking at a game where your objective is to escape from the level's starting point.

You begin each mission as a captive in a certain situation, and must find a logical or lateral means of getting the hell out. Progressing as a prisoner from camp to camp is the general way the missions are structured. The learning curve is not steep at all and the game eases the player into its environment quite comfortably. To begin with, all you really need to do is talk to your fellow prisoners, and later on you are forced to pay more attention to your surroundings and figure things out on your own. Perhaps this almost tutorial-like play in the early stages is responsible for my finding Prisoner of War a little too easy on the whole. But the problem lies in other areas to a degree as well. The obvious solutions usually work, and the prison guards are hardly a hindrance. It would not have hurt to make them a bit more attentive. I blame this on the usual poor standard of AI programming. The guards can be seriously blind sometimes, and if you are discovered trying to escape, it is not difficult to find a little hiding spot (like the space beneath prefabricated buildings, which would be in plain sight for any real person) where they can't catch you.

The most important thing in any game is that the player is entertained. Thankfully, this was true initially, as I quite enjoyed exploring the camps, looking for odd ways to make my escape. Having said that, the novelty wears off quickly, and after a while I found myself just taking the quickest (and most obvious) way out because the game does start to get repetitive. There is only so much fun to be had prowling around in prison camps, and once that is over, there's really nothing more to the game. The concept here is very strong, but the play dynamic does not keep up the interest for long.

The controls are frustrating. This is the only area where some getting used to is needed. In tight situations where your movement directly

affects the outcome of an escape attempt, the character's responses can be sluggish and not always what you were intending. You cannot look up and down in third person mode, and there is no jump key. That annoys me no end. The graphics are generally satisfactory, although the developers took the cheap road with blocky sky-maps and ground textures. The modeling, animation and lip-syncing is good, as is the level design. And I particularly liked the weather effects. Sound is clear and functional, while music is appropriate, but not special.

A great concept translates into a very average game. I had some rather interesting problems with the game's installation on several systems, and also with its interface with windows during actual play. Watch out

▼ "Don't be silly, Hans, no-one will be dumb enough to try climbing over the fence"



as this is an indication that the programming is not entirely stable. In the end it is worth playing if you like originality. Although because of what you'd end up paying for it, I'd say it's not the best value for money. Then again, listening to the prison guards who sound like the Frenchmen from "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" speaking English with German accents, was an experience I won't soon forget.



## real life

The background setting of the game is a historically accurate one. During the later stages of World War II, Allied officers whose planes were shot down, were held by the Germans in prisoner of war camps. They were relatively well treated - provided with shelter and food, and supplied with medicine and small luxuries. The Germans allowed the prisoners to keep their former rank structure, and so they were effectively managed by each other. Their only duty in the camps was to attend roll call in the mornings and evenings. However, many of the soldiers held captive did not wish to sit around and wait for the war to end, but rather planned and executed elaborate escape attempts. While a large number failed, and the participants were shot and killed in the process, a surprising number succeeded. Famous true stories such as "The Great Escape" happened during this time.



Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

## REVIEWED BY

Anton "The\_Basilisk" Lines

MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium III 500 MHz	Pentium III 800 MHz
128MB RAM	256MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	24 x CD ROM
16MB D3D Video Accelerator	32MB D3D Video Accelerator
900 MB HDD	1.2 GB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Original concept	Bugs
Environmental effects	Questionable AI
Easy to pick up and play	Gets old quickly

## AT A GLANCE

While I am ecstatic to see an innovative concept amongst the general intellectual rot, I am also disappointed that the game itself does not fully realise the potential of its concept. Some stability issues, poorly detailed textures and simplistic AI took away a lot of the enjoyment. Prisoner of War somehow struck me as incomplete. Many aspects could have been made far better with just a little more work.

**score 67**

# Awsome Accessories

Logitech Cordless  
Playstation Controller




**R999.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech Cordless  
Freedom Joystick 2.4




**R1099.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech WingMan  
Extreem Digital 3D




**R399.00**  
One Year Warranty

Logitech WingMan  
Attack 2




**R299.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech WingMan  
Formula Force GP




**R999.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech WingMan  
Formula GP (USB)




**R599.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech  
Cordless Mouse




**R399.00**  
Three Year Warranty

Logitech  
QuickCam Express




**R499.00**  
Two Year Warranty

Logitech Cordless  
Desktop Deluxe




**R1099.00**  
Three Year Warranty

*you can at* 

For more information please contact  
your nearest CNA store

## nascar thunder 2003

Motorsport is one of the most attractive sporting events the world over. Season after season thousand of fans flock to race meets, and even more watch the action on television. Of course, racing is big on the PC too, but so often there seems to be something lacking from these titles - precision. That is where EA Sports' NASCAR series makes all the difference.

When it comes to racing titles, there certainly is a lot to choose from. Whether you like the fast paced, thrilling action of open road racing in sports cars, or the technical approach of Formula 1, or whatever, there is a title out there for every PC racer. But what most of these titles lack is the ability to modify the vehicle used by the player. I don't mean upgrading the vehicle or getting broadly-defined parts for it. I mean that nit-picking attention to detail that

true race lovers possess. Tyre pressures. Weight distribution. Exacting gear ratios. These are the things that, while largely behind the scenes, make motor sport so absolutely intriguing - the ability of a team of men to fine tune a vehicle to such a degree that it can out-



perform another vehicle of the same make and model. This is the kind of detail that EA Sports' NASCAR series offers. Detail so precise that you almost need to read a technical manual to get

it right. In fact, reading a manual is probably a good idea...

The problem with this latest title in the NASCAR range, namely NASCAR Thunder 2003, is the same that every other title in the series has. It is not a game intended for the weekend racer. Instead, the game is meant for those kind of players that will take the time to figure out correct tyre pressures and fuel loads, spending hours just getting these details just right. And while there are players out there who love this kind of approach, the market is rather limited. Let's be honest... most of us want to jump behind the wheel and race away with the aim of winning. This goal is rather unattainable in NASCAR Thunder 2003 without spending a good long while sorting out the complexities of the perfect car.

If you're not into this deep-tech stuff, you're probably going to find the title a little tedious. I mean, honestly, most of the tracks in the NASCAR circuit are little more than oval shaped strips of tar, with pit lanes and little else. Sure, there are other tracks; one or two of them twist and turn a bit (which is bound to inspire a few more hours of tweaking) but, for the most part, this title requires the player (as before) to drive fast and turn left. Of course,

there is more to successful racing than just that, but we are once again entering the realm of technicalities - racing lines and such.

Another factor which is sure to act against the title lies in the fact that NASCAR isn't exactly big here in South Africa. But, then again, if you like the technical side of things, that doesn't really matter.

One thing you have to give this title - it's pretty. Very pretty, in fact, with stunning graphics and well modelled cars. The backgrounds are pretty good too, except for the rather "flat" crowds. And the crashes just aren't what they should be - in previous titles, twisted metal and sparks filled the air in a collision. But they are lacking here. Kinda sad, that, because what's NASCAR without big crashes? And the impression of speed within the game is a little weak, too.

One complaint that I do have is a purely taste oriented factor - I like designing my own car colours schemes, like you could in other NASCAR ranges. None of that with the EA Sports version. Here you have to select an existing car from the NASCAR circuit. A small complaint, but one that irritated me none the less.

As I said, if you are a motor sport enthusiast, nay, fanatic, who knows what two bars of pressure in front right tyre is going to do in terms of vehicular performance, then this title is exactly what you need. On the other hand, if you like running around at ultra fast speeds without giving two hoots about gear ratios, you may find this title a bit frustrating.



▲▼ Vehicular mayhem - the only reason most people watch motorsport...



Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

#### REVIEWED BY

Walt Shryke Pretorius

MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium III 500 MHz	Pentium III 900 MHz
128MB RAM	256MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	8 x CD ROM
32MB D3D Video Accelerator	64MB D3D Video Accelerator
740 MB HDD	740 MB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Good graphics	Finicky
High technical detail	Can get boring
	Poor speed impression

#### AT A GLANCE

If you are the kind of gamer who likes to know exactly where all the nuts and bolts on your virtual car are, how many bars of pressure are in your tyres and exactly how many millilitres of fuel your tank holds, then this is the game for you. As long as you don't mind turning left a lot. If detail isn't your cup of tea, then don't bother.

**score 68**

# the gladiators

A deep space mission gone wrong. A savage breed of aliens who lust after violence. A beautiful princess with great hair and everything to lose. A tough soldier who wants to get to know her much better. Yep, that sums up The Gladiators quite nicely...

With the release of The Gladiators, Arxel Tribe brings a new approach to the world of isometric strategy gaming.

The player controls soldiers within a huge arena, where they must fight their opponents to the death, in order to win political advantages for your benefactors. Sounds quite savage, I know, but it is not unlike the political systems and games practiced by a number of ancient cultures right here on Earth. Then again, those ancient cultures didn't have powerful fire-arms with incredible cyclic rates...

The Gladiators breathes some fresh air into the whole strategy thing, because the approach that the game takes is different to most other strategy titles. Instead of building a base and managing resources, all while trying to produce enough fighting units to trounce your enemy, The Gladiators gives the player one main unit - a leader, shall we say - and a number of spawnable units. The limited amount of soldiers that the player has requires a different approach to the game - you need to think a little more carefully than just rushing ahead with guns blazing.

With varying terrain types and differing mission sub-

goals, the game can be rather entertaining, if somewhat unforgiving. The main aim of most missions is to capture vital spawn points, where more soldiers can be created to carry on the good fight - or the bad one, depending on who is winning at the time. But, aside from these points, the game relies on power-ups that can be found all around the arena in question - healing packs, weapon boosters, armour packs and the like are all available within the game.

This power-up approach is fairly unique - there have been other games with character related items, true, but the use of power-ups in this game is far less restrictive than in other titles.

The player has full control of his troops via a rather simple and straight-forward interface, which allows quick choices of units, formations and power-ups available.

On a strategy side of things, The Gladiators does require some thought. It's not quite as simple as one may think, with factors like elevation, cover and formation all being taken into account when it comes to the crunch.

This is a game where excess is important. Explosions are huge, muzzle flashes are tremendous, blood and gore is freely available. Thankfully the game has the graphics to support this high level of carnage. They aren't the best graphics around, but they are clear, crisp and fairly pretty none the less. And to compliment them, a great set of sound effects and double-bass driving metal music has been included.

The Gladiators will probably never be more than a niche market game; a cult classic that is either loved or hated. The single player game has a fairly good story - although not brilliant. It also features a solid multiplayer mode, and is great for LAN gaming. A steadily growing on-line community is also starting to produce user maps.

For those that like their action fast paced and pretty damn brutal, this is one to take a long hard look at.

Be prepared to rethink some of your usual strategies though, because one wrong move, and you're toast!



▲ "Okay, keep 'em peeled men. This is the exact area that Kowalski says he lost his contact lens in..."

▲ Inter-planetary relations took a nasty turn when the alien ambassador forgot to bring the potato salad...



Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

REVIEWED BY  
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius

MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium II 300 MHz	Pentium III 800 MHz
128 MB RAM	192 MB RAM
4 x CD ROM	8 x CD ROM
16MB D3D Video Accelerator	32 MB D3D Video Accelerator
800 MB HDD	800 MB HDD

PLUS	MINUS
Different	Limited maps
Great fun	
Low specification	

AT A GLANCE

Here's a great attempt from Arxel Tribe. With a different approach to the whole strategy thing, The Gladiators is a fun and exciting title, with tons of overstated gore and explosions. Not the best game ever, but certainly very enjoyable.

**score 73**

## far west

*[To be read in a dangerously hick accent] Well, ah, 'member when muh Poppa sez tuh Momma an' us kids, "looks like it's uh time t'be movin' on." We jes' done packed up all our b'longin's and hit that there trail, headin' for where the rollin' hills and plains jes' waited fer folks like us - ready to go an' rearin' to raise longhorn steers. So we done travelled t'wards the settin' sun, day in and day out. There wuz dust and flies and injuns, but we jes' kept on-a drivin until one day, there it wuz in all its glory. And a loud voice boomed out from the heavens, sayin' in a German accent "Velcum to Fhar Vest..."*



It would seem that some developers would do absolutely anything for originality. I don't mean standing on their heads and playing merry tunes from their unspeakable regions... rather I am talking about the tendency to try anything. Once, at least. Developer Greenwood Games decided that publisher JoWood (who we know has the reputation for releasing titles that, while they generally hold potential, rarely meet the mark) needed a new breed of management title to a rather full but generally lacklustre stable. So, in their quest for ultimate originality - while still keeping to the strictures of the genre - Greenwood came up with Far West. To put it plainly, Far West is a ranch management title. Yes, that's right... ranch management. And why not?



▲ Upset by not having been named sheriff, Billy-Joe organised a small "stampede accident..."

We have seen virtually everything else enter the management genre in some way or another, after all. Basically, the player's main aim in this title is to breed longhorn steers. These cattle are almost the only way to actually make money within the game. To ensure a high rate of birth in the player's herd, certain things need to

be taken into account. The first factor is the number of cattle that you start with - more steers means more opportunity for birth, after all. Secondly, the matter of pastures. Good pastures have a better growth rate (of grass) and can support a larger number of longhorns, but cost more. Also, these pastures have other dangers - disease, wolves and cattle rustlers are things the player may need to worry about.

What would a cattle ranch be without cowboys. These workers can be hired at the saloon of the nearby town, and take care of the player's cattle while they are out to pasture. They also drive the cattle and fight off rustlers, provided they are supplied with ammunition. Basically, a ranch cannot operate without these essential characters. To keep cowboys happy, the player needs to supply them with the four basic needs of the typical cowboy; whiskey, coffee, ammunition and beans, all of which can be bought at the town's general store and stored at the ranch for later use. This is one of the tougher balancing acts within the game, because supplies are slow to arrive, and are delivered in limited quantities - great care needs to be taken here, because tired, unhappy, hungry cowboys with no bullets either leave

your employ, or get shot by rustlers or enemy ranch factions.

The last ingredient in successful ranch management (other than a brain) is the wagon. Two types of wagons are available to the player: chuck wagons, for delivering supplies to pastures, and buckboards, used to brand longhorns that are in pastures. Branding is important, because only a branded steer can be sold... and that's what the game is about, after all.

There are other ways to make money, in terms of bank accounts and investments in

developer: greenwood games  
publisher: joewood  
distributor: tba  
price: \$ 39.95 [±R 360.00][excluding shipping]  
genre: ranch management  
internet: www.farwest.de



things like the railroads and newspapers, but without selling steers, you ain't gonna get far in those avenues. This brief overview of the game may make the title seem a little simple, but I assure you, it isn't. Even though the overall premise of the game is rather easy, and the management requirements are uncluttered and straightforward, the game is far from simple (and besides, I didn't mention everything you need to do.) Sadly, there are very few single player missions, but the game does support up to four players in a multiplayer mode.

The graphics are not great, and the game mechanics do have a few issues. The cheesy "spaghetti western" music can get annoying, too, and some of the speech is heavily accented. However, the game does have a certain charm which redeems it and makes it thoroughly enjoyable. I wouldn't say that it is the best title out there, but it certainly is a good addition to JoWood's collection.

If you enjoy management titles and are looking for something a little different, then this is one you should give a try.

Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium III 500 MHz	Pentium 4 1.2 GHz
128MB RAM	256 MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	8 x CD ROM
32 MB D3D Video Accelerator	64MB D3D Video Accelerator
700 MB HDD	700 MB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Original	Limited single player missions
AT A GLANCE	
Far West is an original, fun and addictive game. Take on the challenges of becoming a wild west cattle baron in this management game. Truly an original idea that will breathe some fresh air into the management title market. Its limited single player missions are a problem, though, and the game does require some patience to play.	
<b>score 71</b>	



## Subscribe now and save...

### For your money you get the following:

- 12 issues of New Age Gaming delivered to your postal address
  - 12 Cover CDs attached to the 12 issues delivered to your postal address
  - 12 clear plastic bags containing 12 issues of New Age Gaming delivered to your postal address also containing 12 Cover CD's
  - Interesting text to read each month...
  - Exciting files on the Cover CD
  - The satisfaction of knowing you have people out there who will pretend to like you because you paid them money
  - A nice 'suck-up' letter once a year reminding you to renew your subscription
  - Being able to say, 'I'm a subscriber' when you call or e-mail us and thinking we're going to treat you better than everyone else. What else...Umm, Yes! Save R 80.00 a year!
- Hang on... there's one more thing - never run the risk of missing an issue because you were too slow one day.

Yes, [I bought into the marketing hype] and I want to subscribe for R 340.00 - so hurry up and send me my first issue!

Your Title [Mr. or Mrs. Etc]: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name [first name]: \_\_\_\_\_

and Surname [last name]: \_\_\_\_\_

# Only R 340

### Postal Address

Where must we send the magazine [please triple check this - if it's wrong and we have to send another issue just because of something you messed up, it's going to be deducted off your total remaining magazines]

### Please choose payment method

Bank Deposit    Cheque    Postal Order

☐
☐
☐

The day you were born: \_\_\_\_\_

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Details

Telephone work: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone home: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Cellular: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Can we send unsolicited material [special offers] to your postal address or E-mail address - you'll like them!

Yes    No

☐
☐

Here are the Bank Account details [use these details when putting money into our bank account]  
**New Age Gaming Magazine - Nedbank - Account Number:1469 083 280 - Branch Code:146905 [Commercial Northrand]**  
 Once you have paid the money into our account fax us a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit slip to [011] 704 2948 - no deposit slip = no subscription.

Please make cheques and postal orders out to 'New Age Gaming Magazine' and then mail the completed form above [Photostats are acceptable] to 'Subscription Department' P O Box 237 Olivedale 2158.

For further information please contact the subscriptions office on [011] 704 2701 between the hours of 09h00 & 15h00 or [subs@nag.co.za](mailto:subs@nag.co.za) anytime.

For those of you lacking a military background that's 9am in the morning to 3pm in the afternoon - if you can't call between those times then send an e-mail to [subs@nag.co.za](mailto:subs@nag.co.za) and if you don't have e-mail then send a fax anytime to [011] 704 2948. Please make sure you write clearly. With e-mail and fax enquiries expect to be contacted within 24 hours of sending your enquiry.

Please allow 4-6 weeks delivery for your first issue. Although we try our best to ensure you have your magazine before everyone else this sometimes just isn't the case. Just remember the point of a subscription is convenience and saving cash - not getting it before everyone else.

Please note that all the outlined subscription rates and offers are only valid for postal addresses in South Africa. If you live outside the borders of South Africa and would like to receive the magazine on a monthly basis please contact the subscription department directly for pricing.

# europa 1400: the guilds

While the fires of war still rage through Europe and feudal kings try to best each other for more land, a few intrepid men and women launch themselves headlong onto a more civilised battlefield – the field of trade and business. Armed with tools and wits, they use every tactic in the book to outdo their opponents and become the heads of the most powerful trading dynasties ever seen. Welcome to the cut-throat world of business in the Middle Ages...

While management games are nothing new to PC gamers, it seems that certain companies are trying their utmost to inject a little originality into the genre. One of these companies is JoWood, a distributor known for being capable of releasing games that are either great, or utter rubbish. Luckily they do seem to know what they're doing in the management title field and they have, of late, released a number of titles that are rather different.

Europa 1400: The Guilds, developed by 4Head Studios, is such a title, and it takes a completely different approach to the whole management thing. Most management titles that have anything to do with business seem to start around the turn of the last century. It was at this time, in the early 1900's, that industry truly boomed, and the era does make for

interesting gaming. But some people seem to forget that the whole concept of free-market capitalism didn't start then... in fact, it goes back much, much further, to times that are arguably far more interesting to play. This interest arises from the fact that laws regulating such activities were poorly defined, if they even existed at all – blackmail, bribery and assassination (whether character or otherwise) were everyday practices in the field of business. As the name implies, Europa 1400 begins in the year 1400, with the player being a starting out "business man." The character that the player creates within the game is far more important to successfully playing the title than in most other management sims. In fact, the game could almost be considered a "dynasty management" title, rather than just a plain old supply-and-demand sim. The character is created by selecting a class of father and mother (traders, thieves, clergy, etc) and gaining certain skills from them. Thereafter, the player can choose one of several fields of employment. These include landlords, joiners, blacksmiths, clergy, traders, alchemists and a few others. This field is what your player will specialise in – buildings and products common to this field will be at the player's disposal. Additionally, the player will be

given a house, which is also a rather important part of the game.

As the game progresses, the player will be given Action Points, which can be accumulated, or spent to increase skills and choose new careers. For example, a clergyman could also become a landlord, should he so desire, at a cost of 8 APs.

As the player becomes more advanced in his chosen field, he gains a social standing within his chosen town. This standing (which is also influenced by his house) allows him to marry, have children, and enter local politics – a very valuable tool when you are trying to outdo your opponents. Additionally, businesses can be upgraded, to allow for increased production, as well as a larger variety of goods which can be produced.

As you can see, this is more than just your average management title. There is a little strategy involved too, to a degree, in terms of how you handle your opponents on a social and political level. Presented in 3D, with rather average graphics, and

developer: 4head studios

publisher: jowood

distributor: tba

price: \$ 39.95 [±R 360.00][excluding shipping]

genre: management

internet: www.jowood.com



possessed of a simple game system, Europa 1400 is easy to come to grips with, but very difficult to master. It is possessed of a complexity not often seen in this type of game. It's not enough to successfully run your various businesses; you will need to dabble in politics and various deeds on the wrong side of the law as well, and manage your family, ensuring that you have well educated heirs to take over from your current character when he eventually dies. As far as the technical side goes, this is an average title. But, in terms of an enjoyable gaming experience (not necessarily based on graphics and the like) Europa 1400 is fun, addictive, complex and very challenging – in short, the kind of stuff management sim fans would really enjoy.



▼ The Cathedral sweat shop



Your Components Solution Provider

**rectron**  
www.rectron.net

all games reviewed on rectron machines

REVIEWED BY

Walt "Shryke" Pretorius

MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium III 500 MHz	Pentium 4 1.2 GHz
128MB RAM	256 MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	8 x CD ROM
32 MB D3D Video Accelerator	64MB D3D Video Accelerator
700 MB HDD	700 MB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Original	Not great graphics
Wider focus	Time consuming

AT A GLANCE

Europa 1400: The Guilds is an enticingly different management sim. More dynasty management than just business management, this game requires the player to use wits, guile and subterfuge to set up a trade empire in the Middle Ages. With lots of variety and a nifty new approach, it is a rather fun title for management fans to tackle.

**score 74**

# cultures 2: the gates of asgard

developer: funatics

publisher: jowood

distributor: tba

price: \$ 39.95 [±R 360.00][excluding shipping]

genre: management / strategy

internet: www.jowood.com

I can't say that I ever heard of the original *Cultures - The Discovery of Vinland*; more's the pity, really, as its sequel is a complex and intriguing game. European, and particularly

German and French, game design studios have for long generally imparted very unique feels to their games. Let's take a look at this unconventional management strategy title from JoWood.

The story of *The Gates of Asgard* follows the life of a young man, Bjarni, son of Leif Ericsson, the alleged Viking discoverer of America. The game's campaign, which consists of ten very long missions, begins in the north of Europe and eventually finds its way to Arabic locales. The basic premise is that Ragnarok, the cataclysmic end of the world of Norse mythology, is fast approaching, and it's coming early. Bjarni and some friends he meets along the way must



find their way to the Gates of Asgard and defeat the evil that threatens them. To help him accomplish this task, all he has at his disposal is his nation, his culture, of which he is the leader.

From a graphical standpoint, this game falls a little flat by modern standards. Given the high system requirements, I found the blocky characters and terrain features disappointing. Three levels of zoom are available, but the outermost runs like a dog, while the innermost betrays the sprite nature of the game, and looks downright ugly. And why the 3D graphics requirements, given that everything is sprite based? In contrast, the sound of the game is rich and immersing - town buildings, environmental effects and citizens' conversations all contribute to this.

The play dynamic in *Gates of Asgard*, however, is challenging and intricate, and highly story-driven. In missions, the player is required to explore an area in order to find a resource-rich location for a settlement. Then, various industries must

be set up in the correct order to provide your population with food and building and raw materials for the buildings and industries that the town will require. The tech-tree is unbelievably extensive, and some technologies are available in various levels of sophistication.

In addition to the rather conventional idea of resource management (although there are a couple of dozen distinct resources!), the player must also look after the needs of the populace. Producing new citizens requires a married couple (yes, gender plays a role) with a house and the presence of sufficient surplus food in the town. Women tend the houses in this game, making them more comfortable, which in turn increases the efficiency of the men-folk who live in them. Children take time to grow into adult citizens, and must be fed in the interim. The overall feel of the game is almost a cross between any of the city-building series from Impressions, such as *Pharaoh* and *Zeus*, and the old *Knights and Merchants* and *Settlers 3* (both of the

latter from German development studios.)

Despite the rather primitive graphics, *Cultures 2* is a pleasure to play. The high level of complexity may, at first, be somewhat off-putting, but once the basics have been grasped, there is much to tinker with. Although the combat aspect is present, many of the first missions are accomplished without conflict, as learning how to properly establish the economy is rather involved. Each game takes a number of hours, so although there are only ten missions in the single player campaign, the game is rewardingly long. The look of a town evolves over the course of a game, reflecting both its technological sophistication and the passage of time. This is not a fast-paced game, and is highly recommended for players who like to get heavily involved in intricacies, but not for those who seek fast and furious action.



REVIEWED BY	
Alex "R.A.V.E.N." Jelagin	
MINIMUM RIG	RECOMMENDED RIG
Pentium II 500 MHz	Pentium III 800 MHz
128 MB RAM	128 MB RAM
8 x CD ROM	32 x CD ROM
16 MB D3D Video Accelerator	16 MB D3D Video Accelerator
600 MB HDD	1 GB HDD
PLUS	MINUS
Highly immersive	Dated graphics
Satisfyingly long	Unjustifiably resource hungry

## AT A GLANCE

Despite a somewhat awkward control interface and backward graphics, *Cultures 2* possesses an intriguing and challenging game dynamic. This game is recommended for anyone wishing to while away several hours while sipping coffee desultorily, although the game speed can be scaled. This is a very cerebral title.

score 72



▼ A brewery under construction - the citizens have much to look forward to!



## archangel

After a car accident leaves you seriously wounded, you wake up in a strange place... a monastery for, it appears, absolute morons. The Order of the Absolutely Thick charges you to fight the forces of evil, and they give you a mighty magical sword - batteries not included...

This is probably the second worst game I have played this year (and it slips from the number one position only because I also played K-Hawk this year.) The premise is that the main character, called Michael, wakes up in a strange world after a terrible car accident (although the accident had more to do with poor modelling and less with velocity) and is charged with defeating the forces of evil by characters with poor voice acting. They give him a big, cracker-jack of a sword and send him on his way... somehow forgetting to mention that said sword requires some kind of mystical energy to work. This energy is expended every time you swing the damn thing, whether you hit an opponent, a tree, a wet toilet roll, or even nothing at all. Add to that the fact that your super-weapon holds about enough energy for two and a half swings, and you might as well try beating the bad guys to death with a small flower...

Archangel could have been a good game. Really, it could have. But the developers behind this stinking pile of crud seem to lack pride in their work, and so released a blatantly inferior title into the marketplace.

Poor controls, awful graphics, a story in need of a talented writer... these are just three of Archangel's estimated 32 763 466 areas of "bad suck." If you buy this, you have only yourself to blame!



developer: metropolis software  
publisher: jowood  
distributor: tba  
price: \$ 39.00 [±R 350.00][excluding shipping]  
genre: action adventure  
internet: www.jowood.com



REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Nothing	Horrible graphics Horrible controls Horrible game
score 30	



win 5, [yes 5!] copies of this amazing city building game...

If you were mayor of your city, no hang on, that'll never happen. Just tell us who distributes this title in South Africa!

Entries to reach us by the end of January 2003  
Send your answers and personal information to:  
COMP@NAG.CO.ZA: Subject: City  
Postal entries can be sent to:  
P O Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

NOTE: Only 1 [one] entry per person - any more and we delete the whole lot...

# COMPETITION

# k-hawk: survival instinct

developer: similis software

publisher: jowood

distributor: tba

price: \$ 39.00 [±R 350.00][excluding shipping]

genre: action adventure

internet: www.jowood.com

In the modern world - filled with villainy as it is - there is a great need for people who have the skills, nay, the instinct, to survive. In the PC gaming world - fickle as it is - there is a great need for developers who know their arse from their elbow. Either way, survival is the main factor here...

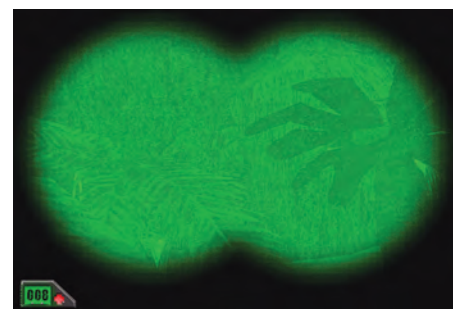
It is official. Just when I thought that some other title would win the accolade, K-Hawk: Survival Instinct made a daring rush and mad slide to home plate... safe! This is, as a last minute entry, the absolute worst game I have come across in 2002, and there have been some real stinkers, trust me. The score I have awarded this game is only because it actually starts up. Ok, so what's it about then. A chopper pilot. A chick [so much for gender equality, Ed] chopper pilot who is shot down and has to make her way to safety by running,

sneaking, crawling and a host of other covert activities. Sounds ok, hey? Well it's not.

With horrible graphics, terrible voice acting (not to mention the lamest script ever written for a game) and controls that suck the big one, this title shouldn't even have been released in the first place.

But it has been, so I am going to town here!

With graphics that have a bit of potential, although not a hell of a lot, K-Hawk seems promising - until you actually start playing the game. Don't try to make your character go anywhere, because chances are you'll get stuck on some unimportant piece of scenery. Don't try to shoot anything, because you'll probably miss. Don't try to sneak, because the AI has super-sensitive hearing and security cameras that could spot a tick on an elephant's rear at a hundred miles. But, then again, the game doesn't feature a "hide quivering under a



▲ There is a guy there - believe it or not...

bush" play option, so you'll just have to suffer along. K-Hawk: Survival Instinct is an insult to any gamer - even those who drool a lot and wipe their nose picking results on their shirts. I wouldn't wish this title on my worst enemy... although it would be a good declaration of war.

JoWood should stick to management titles, and Similis should stop making games entirely. Otherwise, their survival instinct will prove rather lacking...

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Nothing	Everything
score 10	



Electronic Arts Africa has been kind enough to give us 4 copies of each of these expansion packs...



Tell us which pack you'd prefer and name one of the new features available in your preferred expansion

Entries to reach us by the end of January 2003

Send your answers and personal information to:

COMP@NAG.CO.ZA: Subject: WWII

Postal entries can be sent to:

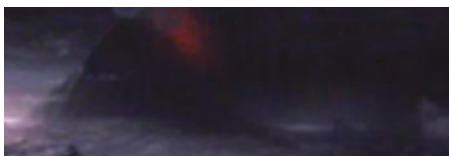
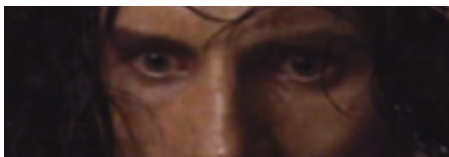
P O Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

NOTE: Only 1 [one] entry per person - any more and we delete the whole lot...

# COMPETITION

# lord of the rings: the two towers

developer: electronic arts  
 publisher: electronic arts  
 distributor: ea africa (011) 516-8300  
 price: R 625.00  
 genre: fighting  
 internet: www.lordoftherings.ea.com



With the release of the Fellowship of the Rings - the first part of the Lord of The Rings movie trilogy - a new sense of interest grew in the work of JRR Tolkien. The father of the fantasy novel has had many fans over the years, but the vision of the film-makers has inspired a whole new group of fans, taking them into the sweeping classic tale of good against evil. So it's small wonder that the works of the mighty Tolkien have finally come to the electronic entertainment arena...

Who would have thought the day would come that movie based merchandising got released before the actual film itself? Well, that day has arrived, folks, because EA, in conjunction with New Line Cinema, have released a PlayStation 2 title based on the second Lord of the Rings movie (The Two Towers) which, by the time you read this, will have been released... but only

▼ I shall help my enemies to enjoy a nice warm lava-bath...



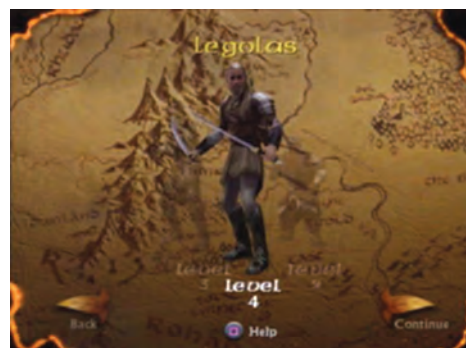
a month or two after this game title was. The main reason for movie based games being released after the actual film is quite logical, really. If the film is a hit, then a wagon-load of stuff hits the market soon after. But if the film flops, nothing more is made around it. This is not the case with this game title, however, because there is no way that the next Lord of the Rings movie will flop - even if it is the worst film ever made, which I truly doubt it will be. So, instead of riding on the film's obvious success, this title has served as something of a hype-machine, adding to the frenzy surrounding the release of the film. And, as an added bonus, the success of the film will add to the success of the game - it's a win-win situation! But I could go on about this for ages - so I'd rather stop now. Trying to understand the motivations behind big business is totally beyond me. Suffice to say, I personally enjoyed the glimpses of the new film that this game afforded me during the reviewing process, and I am sure by the time you read this, you and I both will have seen the film - at least once. Now it's up to me to convince you as to why you should play the game, too.

As far as PlayStation titles go, we have, since the launch of the PlayStation 2, seen everything from the sublime to the ridiculous. We have seen games that

rank way up there, well on their way to becoming classics, and we have seen trash not worth the time of day. This title falls firmly into the former category. The premise behind the game is rather simple, and fairly obvious - or maybe not that obvious, on second thought. While most

people would expect that the player takes the part of Frodo on his continuing quest to return the One Ring of Power to Mount Doom, the game approaches the whole affair from a very different, and rather refreshing angle. Instead of playing the part of the hero, the player gets to control the supporting cast. An interesting decision, I am sure you will agree, but one with good reason. Let's face it folks, the hobbit is boring. He does very little

other than whine and hide while all the good stuff happens. So, instead of playing as a snivelling wimp, the player gets to control the three big guns of the game: Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli. Perhaps their importance in the tale is understated, but their importance in this game is not - because they are it! Each of the three characters can be used in the many missions that await the player. In fact, once a mission is completed, a player can go back and complete it with the two characters not yet used - a very good practice, as you will see in a little while.



The next unexpected factor around this title is the nature of the game. While players may expect an adventure game, this title is more of a fighting game. Whether or not this holds true to the spirit of the original tale is questionable, but the fact is that, instead of running around and finding things, the player in this game needs to knuckle down and bash the tar out of orcs, goblins and Uruk-Hai around every turn. Each of the characters has a strong point. Legolas the elf is great at a distance, while Gimli the dwarf serves the player well when the action is up close and personal. Aragorn the human falls between the two, with good skill at both combat modes, but expert skills in neither. As the game progresses and the player completes the various missions presented, the character used gains experience, levels and new abilities. These abilities are bought with points gained during the game, and the player can choose stronger weapons or combo attacks, based on their personal preference. This is why completing each mission with each character is a good idea - keeping their levels on par with each other works best. If you don't, you may get caught flat footed when a particular character would perform best in a mission, but is generally lacking in levels and experience. Not that each character cannot finish each mission, of course. It's



▲ Oh, look. A cave troll. Great. He's twice my size. Excellent. Now which is the "run screaming" button...



▲ When surrounded by sword wielding enemies and all hope is lost pull out the Uzi and start dispensing the lead



just that they all require different approaches, and the best way to finish a mission the first time round is with the best suited character. That way you get to see more of those movie snippets. A very nice aspect of this way of presenting the game lies in the fact that, regardless who has finished a mission and who hasn't, all the characters will be available in the next mission. So, let's say you're battling to finish a particular mission with Legolas. Let him complete the next one,



and then go back with a more powerful character, who stands a better chance of completing the mission.

The action in this title is fast, furious and chaotic. Don't expect your enemies to line up in an orderly fashion while you try and bash them. No way, Jose - these guys clamber all over you, and you literally have three hundred and sixty degree mayhem ensuing. Characters can all make use of a fast attack, a strong attack, blocking, rushing, killing moves, ranged attacks and combos; each combat session will see you making use of any number of these moves to try and best your enemies. The attacks themselves - even the most complex combos - are easy enough to perform. The toughest part about fighting lies in facing the right direction, and timing your attack in such a way that you do not leave yourself open to a counter attack.



Possibly the most impressive feature in this title is the apparent seamless nature of the game. The game goes

back and forth from real footage (from the LOTR movies) to animated cut scenes, to in-game action and back again without a hint of pausing or loading. This provides the player with a very real sense of being "part" of the game, and catches you off guard at times, too. This is achieved through loading everything necessary to a mission before it starts. One would think that load times would be, if fewer, quite a bit longer, but this isn't the case. Even the largest, most complex levels have relatively short loading times - allowing the player to get on with the action.

The levels themselves are generally large and vibrant, full of background actions and the like. They are rather linear, but that's neither here nor there... this is a fighting game, not an adventure, remember? Each level has a number of static camera positions (some with a little movement) that allow the player the best view of the action involved.

With brilliant graphics, a great control system, exciting action and a massive amount of replayability - not to mention a large number of missions based on both movies - Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers falls into my top ten console games of all time. At the time of writing this, I have seen very little that even comes close to this title. The biggest problem is that the game does not capture the spirit of the original story, but, then again, it is a movie game, isn't it? This is just about as much fun as you can have with your PlayStation 2. An absolute must for fighting fans... hell, for everyone who loves a good game!

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
REQUIRED	CONTROLLER SUPPORT
1 Player	Vibration
80kb min memory	Analog Sticks only
PLUS	MINUS
Brilliant graphics "Seamless" Great action	Not in original LOTR spirit
AT A GLANCE	
Where one might expect a drawn out adventure title, here comes one of the best fighting titles of all time (in my humble opinion.) Non stop action awaits as the player takes control of Legolas, Gimli or Aragorn in this thrilling, chaotic fantasy fighter. This is Lord of the Rings as you probably thought you would never see it!	
score 91	

## pikmin

Once upon a time in a land there lived the Tellyubbies. They spent all day playing games and learning new things, as well as staring at one zonked-out sun. And occasionally they would help aliens who crashed there, and beat the crap out of the local wildlife. No wait, that's not right. That is Pikmin, though.

So, you are stranded on an unknown planet. Your ship parts are scattered all over a forest. You only have 30 days of oxygen left then the poisonous atmosphere will kill you. What do you do? What dooo you dooo!? If it were me, I'd run in a panic, or try and rush evolution by gulping the air on occasion and hoping I



adapt. After that I'd steal the Editor's FHM and pawn it to Shryke for a cup of coffee. But that's why I'm not a space-faring being. The chap in Pikmin is, though, and he's in the same pickle. Things start looking up, though, when he finds a device that spawns strange creatures who are eager to follow his every command. He calls the device an Onion (because it looks like one), and he calls the creatures Pikmin, because they look like the Pikmin brand of carrots from his homeworld. I'd have called them anorexic Tellyubbies who ate more acid than a decade of Hippies, but once again I'm not of a space-faring species.

Pikmin is quite possibly the most original title to yet appear on the GameCube. It's pretty much above anything released on any other consoles. In fact, I'd be hard pressed to find a game that reminds me of Pikmin. But as usual, when you get very experimental, you can either go very wrong or very right. Pikmin is very right. Very Right. And if throwing zoned-out plant-sprites at big bugs is wrong, I don't want to be right!

The premise behind Pikmin is simple. You have 30 days to rebuild your ship. The only way you can do this is by going all over the forest areas and collecting the debris. For this you will need Pikmin - eager, plant-like sprites who follow you around and do what you want. You give them orders by throwing them at something, and if there is something to do, they will do it. These range from collection tablets for more Pikmin, breaking down walls, creating bridges and attacking creatures. There are three kinds of Pikmin, each of which comes from a different kind of 'onion'. In short there are three colours. Red Pikmin can resist fire and are quite strong. Yellow Pikmin throw further and can carry bombs. Blue Pikmin can move through water. Between these three varieties you have to navigate the rather hostile world in which you find yourself. To make more Pikmin, you need to feed tablets or creature corpses to the Onions. For instance, a 5 tablet

spawns six Pikmin, but you need five Pikmin to carry it. When Pikmin spawn they are planted into the ground, and you have to pull them out. Leave them in the ground, and they start blooming. A Pikmin with a bud is

faster than one with a leaf, but a Pikmin with a flower outraces both. Leave Pikmins in the ground too long and they wilt away.

You can also find nectar, which attract the Pikmin like addicts to a crackhouse. They sit there and sip the stuff up hungrily, the pay-off being that they bud faster, and faster Pikmin are

great. Pikmin that are more evolved also last longer in battle. Considering that the planet you are on is inhabited by big bugs, spiders, flame-spouting molls, body-slammng frogs and some weirder stuff, you need that Pikmin army.

## Pika!

At any point you can only have 100 Pikmin in the field - harvested or planted. But you can store countless amounts in the Onions. At the end of each day you have to make sure the Pikmin are back in the Onions,



▲ I've put it together three times and I still don't know where that goes...





▲ Remember, go for the eyes...



▲ Take that alien truffle to table 4, pronto!

else they are eaten by the local predators. This is easy at the beginning, but later on you'll have squads of them doing different things, and this makes managing them tough. The pressure is really on to recover all 30 parts in the 30 days, so it's a hectic and paced game, which means keeping track of your 'slaves' is as stressful as it is fun.

Of course, parts don't just lie around in easy reach. In essence Pikmin is a puzzler. You need to figure a way out to get parts. Sometimes it's as simple as spawning enough blue Pikmin to kill two hostile frogs and then

carrying the part out of the water. Sometimes you need to use Yellow Pikmin to carry bombs and blow up rock walls in your way. Eventually using all three Pikmin types' skills is what helps you beat the game. Often a part is only reachable once you've improved your ship's technology enough to help you out. There seems to be a very specific way to play Pikmin, which will limit the replayability of the title, but that's the nature of a Puzzle title in any case. The simplistic nature of the title is excellent - it's very easy to understand, and usually you don't fail because you don't understand something - you're just not paying attention to the environment. There is a certain strategy in getting a right amount of Pikmin for the job, which parts you should go for first, and how to balance your more and less evolved Pikmin.

You control your Pikmin horde through three commands. One tells them to stay, the other tells them to come to you (which means they follow you), and the third is to throw them at stuff - if they can do something they will. When you tell them to stay, they split into groups based on colour, maturity and whether they are carrying objects such as bombs. The other controller buttons move you around, manoeuvre the camera direction, zoom, and which way your following horde is facing. The controls are very easy to master - one big advantage of a console game.

#### Pik-Pik!

Of course, this isn't the perfect game. Apart from that it won't appeal to anyone that wants an action game that you can play and drop at whim, there are a few issues. Until you have your radar, it's quite hard to spot a Pikmin if he's not following you (and thus risk losing him at nightfall). Though you can control the Pikmin horde to an extent, they still seem to do stupid things. For instance, if I walked across a bridge, the Pikmin on the fringes tend to walk into the water (great unless they aren't blue). Naturally this makes Pikmin a mature game, since children do not possess the vocabulary you need to express how it feels when half your army drowns unwittingly. They also tend to have trouble following you up narrow spaces, and usually you have to waste time leading small pockets of them through an

obstacle. The biggest problem I have is that they take orders directly. For instance if they are carrying something, and they are under attack, they won't call for help, and when you get to investigate what happened to that missing convoy, all you find is a dead bug's body and a lot of Pikmin ghosts. At least the Pikmin attack when under threat, so if they die they tend to leave a seed behind - which becomes another Pikmin.

Of course, much more works than that which does not.

It's quite cool to hear a Pikmin squeal when they find a bomb they can pick up, or hearing a chorus of them go 'Hup! Hup! Hup!' as they carry something big past you. In short, it's too cute, but not in that annoying kind of way. At the very least you grow to like the strange sprites, considering they do all the work for you! Besides, cute as they are, there is something

truly vicious about them when they attack something. Just be glad you're the one giving orders.

Pikmin is a gem, and anyone who wants something more substantial to play on the GameCube has to get this title. In fact, in my opinion it's one of the best games on the GameCube, and one of the best games made. It's just a pity that other platforms won't be able to appreciate its sheer genius...



REVIEWED BY	
James "Oooo! Bomb!" Francis	
REQUIRED	CONTROLLER SUPPORT
1 player	
19 memory blocks	
PLUS	MINUS
Fun	Pikmin = Lemmings
Challenging	No re-playability
Simple interface	Not a cheese to be seen
AT A GLANCE	
Pikmin is a gem that's sadly confined to only the GameCube. Of course, if you have a GameCube, and you want something substantial, challenging, cute and fun all in one, including blowing up stuff and killing creatures, then get Pikmin.	
score 90	

# Who says you can't buy love.....

## Wingman Force 3D

Feel the action in your games. This low cost, force feedback joystick lets you feel weapon recoils, explosions, and much more. The space-saving design takes up minimal room on your desktop. Includes a twist handle for convenient rudder control.

**R799.00**



## Mouseman Dual Optical

This optical mouse delivers twice the precision as other optical mice. Two sensors work seamlessly to calculate surface microstructures while a patented microprocessor synthesizes this information in real time. The result? A faster, more accurate, and smoother performance on a variety of surfaces.

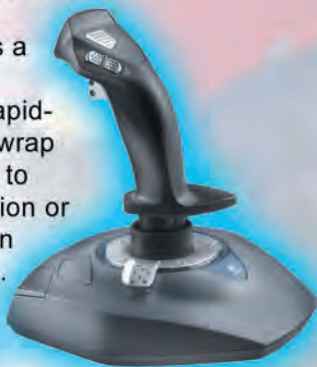
**R499.00**



## Wingman Attack2

Entry-level joystick with new, modern design for more performance. WingMan® Attack™ 2 provides a versatile grip handle with five programmable buttons and a rapid-fire trigger. You can choose to wrap your thumb around the handle, to hold on tight during intense action or to position it on top of the action buttons to quickly fire weapons.

**R299.00**



## Wingman Formula GP

Precision-engineered for speed and control. This low cost racing wheel lets you experience the thrills of driving a racecar. The custom designed wheel shape includes rubber hand grips for superior comfort and precise steering control.

**R499.00**



## Wingman Extreem Digital 3D

Digital response and control mean fast, accurate, deadly play. This cool design features the new Logitech handle, so efficient you have to try to believe. The twist capability gives this stick 3D capability. The rapid fire trigger, one 8 way hat switch and 4 programmable buttons intelligently placed on the handle will increase your efficiency in the heat of battle.

**R399.00**



## Wingman Formula Force GP

Feel what really happens on the racetrack. This low cost, force feedback steering wheel lets you feel the road, bumps, walls, and crashes. The custom designed wheel shape includes rubber hand grips for premium comfort and precise steering control. Two wheel-mounted gear shifters allow for fast gear changes while staying in control.

**R999.00**



**All prices including VAT Prices exclude delivery  
All prices subject to final approval**

### Logitech Cordless Playstation Controller

Play where you want with 2.4GHz Cordless Freedom and have no cords to trip over. 2.4 GHz Radio Frequency, 50-hour battery life, 17-foot range with no cords to trip over, 8 way pressure sensitive D-pad, Vibration Feedback, Digital, Analog and Driving modes, Analog buttons. Use up to 8 gamepads in the same room with no interference. Works with games for PlayStation™ PSOne™ and PlayStation 2

**R999.00**



### Logitech Driving Force

Feel the new level of driving realism in GRAN TURISMO™ 3 A-spec and other driving games that support Logitech® Force Feedback. This newest force feedback steering wheel lets you feel the road, car handling, bumps, walls, and crashes like never before. The wheel has rubber hand grips for premium comfort and precise steering control.

**R1199.00**



### Logitech Z-540

The Logitech Z540 enhances the PC gaming experience through a revolutionary subwoofer design delivering twice the bass energy of similar systems. The 5-piece system utilizes patented M3D for realistic surround sound. Innovative satellites stand on desk or mount on the wall and provide silky smooth mid and high frequencies.

### Logitech Z-560

Logitech's THX® certified Z560 is a 4.1 surround sound system providing 400 watts of awesome power for PC games, music and DVDs. The brute force subwoofer design delivers huge, room-thumping bass while the revolutionary satellite drivers enhance mid and high-range tones. Feel as if you're right in the middle of it.

**R1199.00**



**R3799.00**



## Pre Book Now, Available Soon!

### Logitech MOMO Racing Force

Turbocharge your performance with the authentic MOMO® racing wheel. Designed by racing professionals, the full rubber wheel, stick shifter, foot pedals and force-feedback technology give you the realistic racing experience you're looking for. Includes two paddle shifters, six programmable buttons, and realistic gas and brake pedals to put you in full control.

**R1499.00**



### Logitech Cordless Freedom Joystick

Experience the freedom and eliminate the clutter. This revolutionary cordless joystick uses Logitech's 2.4 GHz Cordless Freedom technology to deliver reliable, lag-free performance. The innovative design features an aluminium trigger and throttle and a heavy rubber base.

**R999.00**



### Logitech Z-680

Logitech's Z-680 is a breathtaking THX-certified 5.1 surround sound speaker system. Using Dolby® Digital and DTS® hardware decoding for true 5.1 digital sound, the Z-680 speaker system pounds out 450 watts of RMS power for PCs, video game consoles, and more. Includes a digital SoundTouch control centre for precise control. 2-year guarantee.

**R6499.00**



To order or pre book contact us on

**logitech@netdial.co.za**

**Or**

**(011) 793-1116**

# star wars: rogue leader

**Fly an X-Wing, you must. Blow up the Deathstar, you will. Trip an AT-AT, you can. Scream in agonising frustration, you may. Keep trying, you shall. Strap on a crash helmet, gulp down your Force-strength coffee and go on a X-Wing ride with us.**

A long time ago in a Galaxy far far away a bunch of supreme beings decided to send George Lucas the idea for Star Wars, a low-budget, plastic-laden, laser-filled sci-fi kitsch film that became a cult classic of note. Now whether it was the Jedi powers, the Lightsabers, James Earl Jones' wheezing, the Deathstar or a young, nublie Carrie Fisher in a slave girl bikini that caught everyone's attention and spawned tons of books, comics and toys is a point of long debate, but we can firmly know that the force of Star Wars is going to be around for a while.

Strangely, Star Wars, like most Sci-Fi series, seems to have a problem with decent games. They generally sell well, but you can put 'Wookies love it!' on manure, and you have a sure seller. Maybe this is why most Star Wars games suck - terribly. Fortunately there are a few gems.

They are few and far between, but they are worth it. I'm talking about the likes of X-Wing vs. Tie Fighter, Jedi Knight and Rogue Squadron. The latter appeared on the N64, so it seems fitting that the sequel is a GameCube release. Rogue Leader puts you in charge of your own craft and a few wingmen as you take on the empire through memorable battles from the original three movies. After a brief, and rather pointless tutorial stage you get thrown right into the deep end with the daring attack on the Deathstar at the end of the first (fourth) movie. This might really seem like a big step - after all, who attacks the Deathstar when they are still a rookie?! But in the cutthroat world of Imperial rebels you have to take challenges head on (as well as the occasional Imperial construction project) if you want to climb that career ladder.

Whether you end up in flames or in glory is up to you. After you get through the harrowing Deathstar attack, the beauty and impossibility of the game reveals itself.

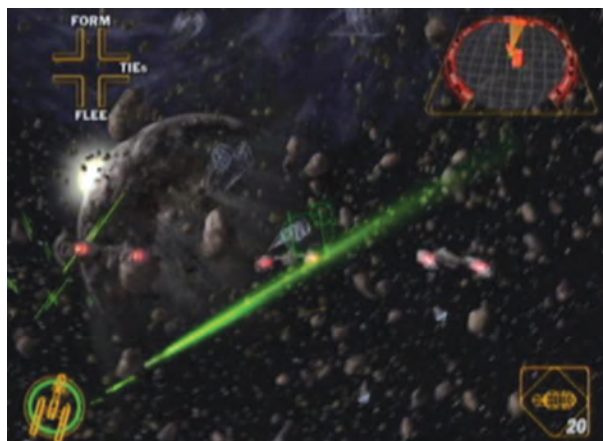
This is truly a stunner of a title. In some battles you'll be fighting Tie Fighters around huge space freighters. In others you slip through asteroid fields, or you dodge floating constructions that appear through the clouds of Mos Aisley. Even the snowy battle of Hoth is spectacular, complete with the task of harpooning AT-AT legs. The Force truly is with Rogue Leader's



graphics. Control wise there aren't any complicated things to worry about. You don't have limited shots, neither do you have to use a throttle. It's a simple point-and-shoot affair.

You can give your wingmen quick orders with the D-pad, and the other buttons zoom in and out, change your cockpit view or bring up a screen for easy spotting of bad people. Each mission has about three stages that need completing and you have three lives to manage it in. If you complete the missions successfully, the next stage opens up. If you do very well, you get awarded bronze, silver and gold awards, which unlock new ships to use in a stage. Each ship has different weapons, speed and handling, so it's quite a change playing a level with an A-wing to, say, an X-Wing.

In essence, it's an arcade flyer from the Star Wars universe. It's tough, but addictive, and looks great. Definitely one of the better Star Wars games in recent years.



developer: factor 5  
publisher: lucasarts  
distributor: ea africa (011) 516-8300  
price: R 449.00  
genre: movie money machine  
internet: www.ea.co.za

## REVIEWED BY

James "Yoda was a Muppet" Francis

## REQUIRED CONTROLLER SUPPORT

1 Player  
3 Memory blocks

## PLUS

Looks great  
Tough  
Varied battles

## MINUS

Frustrating  
A bit limited

## AT A GLANCE

Star Wars lacks a few good titles, but you can add Rogue Leader to that slowly-growing pile. It looks great, plays well, and will give you hours of entertainment, if you don't give up in frustration over its unforgiving missions.

**score 80**



# The Sims™

now available



on PlayStation®2

game

DION  
SOUND BY DESIGN

makro

Incredible  
CONNECTION

LOOK & LISTEN  
WE KNOW MUSIC

you can at ena

TOYS R US

Pick n Play  
hypermarket

© 2002 Electronic Arts Inc. Electronic Arts, The Sims, EA GAMES and the EA GAMES logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. EA GAMES(tm) is an Electronic Arts(tm) brand.

# warioland 4

Take Mario. Give him Steroids. Give him a Cadillac. Give him the hardest head on the planet. Feed him enough coffee to make him grin like a psychotic monkey. Make him colour blind and let him dye his own clothes. Meet Wario...

Let me get to the point - I like Wario. See, the Mario Brothers Mario and Luigi have always been a bit pacifistic. Most of the time they'd just jump on stuff, grab loot and run for it. But not Wario. Wario's philosophy is that if you can't ram your head or shoulder through it, you probably need a longer run-up.

In Warioland 4, our man reads a newspaper clipping revealing a newly discovered golden pyramid. Considering Wario has a thing for coins, gold, money and anything else that makes him rich, you can't say 'Richie Rich' and he's in his Cadillac on route to the new discovery. But as soon as he gets there and does a little exploring, he falls deep into the heart of the mysterious pyramid. Here he is faced with four different areas, each with four levels, which he needs to complete to finally get to the riches of the ancient monument.

If you are familiar with the play dynamic on the platform side of the Mario games, then you'd be at home with Wario. It features the familiar jump-here-get-that-bounce-on-that-ugly-thing style of play from the series, but with a few twists. The most obvious change is how Wario plays. The tutorial level quickly gets you going with the basics of the man. Unlike Mario and family, Wario has two attack moves, apart from jumping on things. He can rush in and hit things with his shoulder, as well as take a longer run-up and power-slam his head into things. Some enemies are

equipped with spears or pointy bits, so you need to jump on them first, but then a quick slam takes care of the rest. He can also pick things up, including stunned enemies to throw at other critters.

The second big change over the Mario series is how you play. WarioLand is in the tradition of Marioland, where you can replay levels to get all the bonuses in each. At the end of a level you hit a statue which causes a portal to open at the beginning of the level. Then you have a limited amount of time to get back to the start and jump through the portal. You need a key in order to open the

next level, and you need four crystal segments for each level to eventually complete a section. Complete all sections and you beat the game. Each level becomes more logically-challenging. For instance, in the playroom levels,

you have to selectively break certain blocks in areas, else you can't reach higher platforms. Or you need to use slot machines around the level to unlock bonuses or get vital items.

The third aspect of WarioLand is Wario himself. Apart from his thuggish ways, he can also be deformed. This ranges from setting the guy on fire to making him obese to turning him into a bat or zombie. Sometimes these are meant to slow you down, and sometimes they are part of the game. For instance, you get walls that can only be destroyed if Wario is on fire. That means you need to get him on fire and then direct him as fast as possible to the wall you want destroyed. Or in the undead level you need to become a bat. That's easy, but fluttering upwards and avoiding all the light-

sources that can change you back is quite tricky. Okay, setting someone alight sounds rather violent. It would be too, but the game is very cartoon-orientated. Of all the Mario-related games I've played so far on the GBA Wario is by far the best-looking. Drawn in a great cartoon-style, it's quite funny to see Wario get stung by a bee and his head swollen to a huge size, causing him to float around. Besides, he's had it coming - there's enough ego in our tomb raider

developer: nintendo  
publisher: nintendo  
distributor: futronics (011) 315-0079  
price: R 399.00  
genre: platform  
internet: www.nintendo.com



to shame the most flamboyant Simunye presenter. Throughout the game Wario chuckles, sneers, jeers and does other assorted things as you play. It's quite amusing as he goes "Ha!" when you get him hurt on an enemy's weapon. The bad guys are just as ridiculous and range from small things with spears and psychotic wasps who like to attack from above to mini Warios in mini Cadillacs and huge fish out for your hide. At the end of each section you meet a boss that needs to be taken care of.

Overall, a must-get platformer for the GBA, and a great addition to Wario's legacy. If you like platformers, forget Mario Advance and the other goodie two-shoes - get Warioland 4 instead. Who needs to save the girl when you can get the loot instead?



## REVIEWED BY

James "Gets the Loot" Francis

## PLUS

Looks great  
Funny  
Varied levels

## MINUS

Frustrating  
Overly tough parts

## AT A GLANCE

Warioland 4 is Wario's first appearance on the Gameboy Advance, and a great debut it is. In vivid, cartoon animations, you get to explore very varied levels in search of the loot Wario craves. A great addition to the series, and a must-own for a platformer fans.

score 89

## Break the speed limit on the super-highway

ADSL allows high-speed data transmissions by delivering powerful, high rate digital data over existing telephone lines, at a much lower cost.

With ADSL you get:

- Real time communication - Instant downloading
- Cost savings - Flat monthly Internet & Telkom bill
- Simultaneous use of voice and data
- High connection speeds for real-time online gaming

# adsl @ worldonline\*

**Supercharge your Internet connection**



THE COMMUNICATION COMPANY

[www.worldonline.co.za](http://www.worldonline.co.za)

A DIVISION OF  TISCALI

Call us now:

# 0860 00 56 56

or e-mail: [sales@worldonline.co.za](mailto:sales@worldonline.co.za)

\* This service is subject to your geographical location

# Studio version 8

Your Components Solution Provider



sponsored by



**Studio 8** provides a wealth of powerful and professional quality features to demanding home editors who want to make stunning movies, even from video sources like MPEG. Studio offers a frame-accurate control of your movies, so advanced features like colour correction, motion speed and title effects are quick and easy. The CD creation process is directly integrated into the timeline, so you can design your menus and still get back later to editing features. Use moving videos for buttons and backgrounds to bring life and fun to your menus. Simply click on Make Disk button in the final editing stage, so the disk making process is simpler than ever.

**Pinnacle Studio version 8 Software is packed with power. Its simple, drag and drop interface combines with a ton of professional features to help you make your video something really special!**

## Studio 8 new features

### Integrated CD and DVD authoring

Studio 8 now has integrated CD and DVD creation within the editing process. It brings new features previously only available in Pinnacle's professional CD and DVD authoring products:

- Motion menu buttons - Motion menu backgrounds - Music on menus - Unlimited menus - Menu to menu links - Return to menu links - Authoring on timeline in Edit Mode - Automatically create chapters based on scenes - New album tab for menu templates - Menus edited and created using TitleDeko - Menus added to video track - New timeline track shows chapter points and links - Menu/chapter links may be modified in toolbox.

### Improved Capture/Import capability

Import MPEG files.

### Improved editing features

DVD/VCD/SVCD Authoring - Edit MPEG-1 and MPEG-2 files on the timeline - New user interface integrates TitleDeko into Studio.

### Improved output features

Make Disc tab from Make Movie - Options in Setup dialog: including VCD, SVCD, DVD presets.

## 1. Make movies on disk quickly and easily

### More easy to access

No more rewind or fast forward: watching your movies on a disk allows you to instantly go to the scene you want. Studio 8 lets you create unlimited menus and sub-menus, so if you have several different movies on one disk you can create a different menu for each group of scenes.

### and more convenient to share

Disk is also an ideal way to archive your videos and keep them safe, and to make several copies, as quality will not degrade. As Studio 8 allows you to import MPEG files, you can compile on an unique DVD your old tapes and CDs.

## 2. Create unique CD and DVDs

### A completely integrated process of creation

Most of competitive applications do not allow you to edit your movie once you have started the authoring process. Only Studio 8 provides the authoring/design process built into the timeline, so you can design your menus and still get back later to editing features to perfect your movie.

### Professional effects to amaze your audience

Studio 8 proposes a bunch of preset templates to create your menus but you may prefer to use moving videos and animations for menu buttons and

backgrounds to bring life and fun to your menus.

Choose a background music from the Studio's library; if you have created a motion menu, the length of the music will automatically fit with the duration of your clip. You can also import your favourite music tracks.

### Direct burn-to-disk

To make CD and DVD creation easier, we've included a Make Disk button in the final editing stage, so the disk making process is simpler than ever. Simply choose whether it's VCD, SVCD or DVD disk you want and Studio 8 does the rest.

## 3. Comply with the latest technology standards

Studio 8 allows you to edit in top quality professional MPEG 2 format, so your footage is automatically in the right format for saving onto disk. You can also import MPEG videos from existing personal video CDs or DVD's and mix with your footage on the timeline.

## 4. Use professional video tools & features

Pinnacle is the only company completely dedicated to the video; Studio 8 has integrated the heritage from high-level applications proposed to video professionals.

Pinnacle TitleDeko: to create great looking titles and to edit your menus.

Pinnacle HollywoodFX: professional 3D transitions to add the same stunning effects users see on television in only a few seconds

Authoring engine and know-how from Pinnacle Impression DVD Pro background processing: a feature previously available only with Pinnacle professional products. It means that you don't have to wait for the PC to process complex effects - rendering takes place in the background while you carry on working.

## 5. Enjoy all unique features that made Studio a reference

Smart Start, Smart Stop - Pinnacle Studio saves time and efforts by instantly detecting where each scene starts and stops.

More Video, More Fun - Smart Capture™ lets users work with more video in less space. Pinnacle Studio can capture 1hour DV video in 360 MB of disk space while other editing programmes take 14 Gb.

More Power, More Creativity - Pinnacle Studio provides frame-accurate control of your movies, so advanced features like colour correction, slow and fast motion and title effects are quick and easy.

No Music, No Problem! - Only Pinnacle Studio includes Smart Sound, a background music generator that creates a soundtrack perfectly matched to the movie.

## Product range specificities

### STUDIO DELUXE



**Pinnacle Studio Deluxe** includes a unique break out box coming from the high-end solutions developed by Pinnacle for Advanced users and professionals. This hub-like tool allows easy desktop connection to any usual analogue and digital video sources such as camcorders, VCR, web cam, or TV. You can then edit those movies, and export them back to any media; you can also easily convert your old VHS tapes to high quality DV tapes.

### STUDIO DC10 PLUS



**Pinnacle Studio DC10 plus** comes with a PCI board to connect analogue video sources (VHS or Hi8 camcorders, webcam, TV, etc) and outsource final productions back to analogue tapes. You may also digitalize movies to share them on Internet or benefit from Studio 8's integrated CD and DVD authoring archive them in high quality.

### STUDIO DV PLUS



**Pinnacle Studio DV Plus** gives a more flexible choice of ways to screen your edited movies: you can outsource to digital tapes if your camcorder features DV-in capabilities, or choose to connect directly to a VCR in order to create VHS tapes. No need then to record through your DV camcorder, which makes less wear and tear. You can also benefit from Studio 8's integrated CD and DVD authoring to make stunning movies quickly and easily on disk.

### STUDIO DV / DV MOBILE



**Own a Digital camcorder?** With Pinnacle Studio DV, capture your movies digitally so the quality is as good as the day you filmed it. Edit your videos and then save them onto digital tapes, make video for the web, or benefit from Studio 8's integrated CD and DVD authoring to make stunning movies quickly and easily on disk.

OFFICIAL GLOBAL PARTNER

## Double up...



32x CD-Rewritable Drive



16x DVD-ROM Drive

**WORLD 1 LEADERS**  
IN OPTICAL STORAGE DEVICES



12x DVD-ROM Drive



8x Slim CD-Rewritable Drive



52x CD-ROM Drive



DVD-Super Multi Writer

With LG's new GCC4120B Combo Drive, you can double up on your CD-R/RW function with DVD-ROM capabilities. This combo drive has 12-speed CD-R, 8-speed CD-RW, 32-speed CD-ROM and 8x-speed DVD-ROM functions. Plus the Exact Link Function prevents any errors occurring during its writing operation, giving you the enjoyment of a multimedia solution with the highest reliable recording technology for CD-R/RW and the highest picture quality for DVD playback.



## Digitally yours

# geforce fx announced

nVidia has finally let the cat out of the bag on their next generation Graphics Processing Unit which is to compete and hopefully surpass the now King in the market, the Radeon 9700 GPU. Keeping market awareness of their GeForce name, the nVidia has aptly named their new GPU the GeForce FX. Current information shows that the card is scheduled for a world wide release in February and by the time you read this article there should be some initial benchmarks available from press on the Internet.

The new GPU will be using a 0.13 micron manufacturing process for a smaller die size, optimized power usage and also to produce less heat. The GeForce FX will also utilize a 400 MHz RAMDAC for superior graphics display on QXGA displays and take advantage of the new AGP 8x standard. Whether AGP 8x is anything more than marketing hype is still a debatable point at this stage due to its relative newness. Current tests show little improvement over AGP 4x, but we can always hope. As is usual with next generation GPUs the GeForce FX ushers in a host of new technology for faster rendering and improved image quality. The list includes a new rendering engine dubbed CineFX, a DDR II Memory Interface, IntelliSample Technology, Video Mixing Rendering, Digital Vibrance Control, a 64-phase Video Scaler and support for DirectX 9.0 and OpenGL 1.4. Below is a short summary of the new technologies and those that want a more detailed explanation are advised to visit the nVidia website which contains detailed technology briefs on each.

The new CineFX engine according to nVidia will be able to produce stunning visuals that could be considered on par with what is produced in Hollywood thus the CineFX name. The two workhorses behind the CineFX engine are Pixel Shaders 2.0+ and Vertex Shaders 2.0+. Both of these are said to be greatly enhanced in both ease of use from a developer point of view and the ability to produce unsurpassed realism within 3D games and applications. I am not going to go into details here suffice to say that the new pixel shader supports longer instructions and the ability to render multiple textures and effects in a single pass and is the most sophisticated

implementation of its kind yet. One of nVidia's big marketing points is that the CineFX engine can work in 128-bit studio colour precision which further enhances

special effects, materials and realism. Using the CineFX engine the GeForce FX is said to be able to render the Final Fantasy movie in realtime although they don't quite say under what conditions (i.e. geometry only, post processing included or not and if its with or without special effects).

IntelliSample is the next generation of nVidias Antialiasing implementation for producing 3D graphics where the edges of objects are smoothed to produce improved visual quality. IntelliSample promises to produce better results than current 4X and 4XS sampling modes by calculating 50% more samples. The GeForce FX's innovative new architecture includes an advanced and completely transparent form of loss-less depth Z-buffer and colour compression technology. The result would be that all modes of antialiasing are available at all resolutions without any performance hit. Now this sounds quite interesting and I am definitely looking forward to seeing this technology in action. To date there has been no antialiasing implementation that hasn't taken a knock in frame rate.

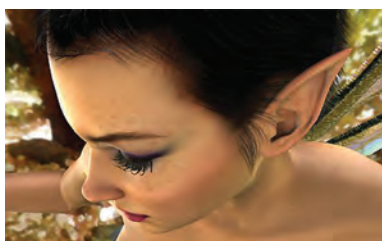
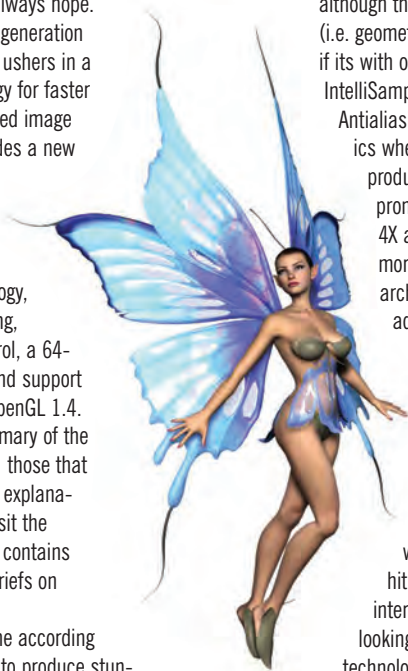
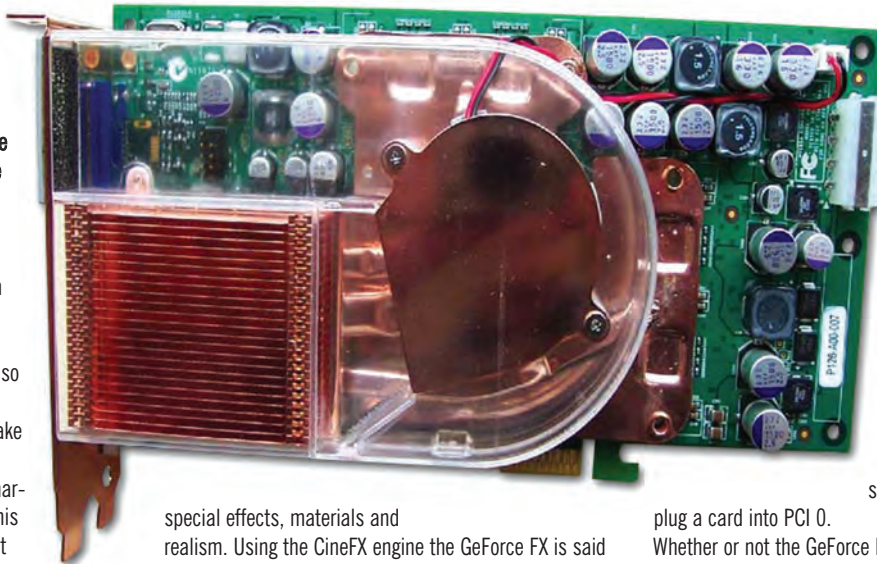
Digital Vibrance Control will be the ability to enhance picture and video colours to produce more vibrant and contrasting images. Another new technology is Video Mixing Rendering which will allow you to view multiple video streams simultaneously and eliminate the problems associated with overlays when doing this. Along the same lines the GeForce FX will also feature a 64-phase Video Scaler for improved DVD and

video scaling. I can't quite see how these technologies will benefit 3D gaming, but they should be able to provide developers with some tools for cinematic sequences.

On the hardware side of things the GeForce FX will utilize the new DDR II memory with a clock of up to 1 GHz. Something else that might be of interest is the cooling unit seen on the reference boards which is more a "blower" than a heatsink and works by blowing out the hot air and sucking in cool air. Unfortunately it looks like this mechanism will fit over your first PCI slot making it impossible to

plug a card into PCI 0.

Whether or not the GeForce FX will outperform the likes of the Radeon 9700 remains to be seen and there is currently no benchmarking information available. Funnily enough, for a change nVidia is playing catch-up to ATI and even if they get the GeForce FX out in February they still have to contend with the fact that ATI's next GPU release is scheduled for May. 2003 is definitely going to be quite interesting as the two competitors try and win market share, and hopefully drop their prices to a more reasonable level. That being said the price of the GeForce FX cards will range from \$399.00 at the low-end to \$599.00 at the high end, not



exactly what you would consider cheap and I think the price of the high-end GeForce FX cards will even scare most hardcore gamers.

Well that's it until we see the first cards appear here in South Africa. On paper the GeForce FX looks astonishing and technically should outperform the Radeon 9700, although after my run in with the Matrox Parhelia I don't quite put as much faith in specifications as I used to. I will await the arrival of the GeForce FX with much anticipation and hope that nVidia steals back the title of King in the 3D market.

It seems that case modding has taken off quite well locally and judging from what I have seen at some LAN events a lot of people are putting in side windows, fan busses and case lights. Putting these in your machine yourself can entail quite a lot of work and I for one am a bit hesitant to cut up a perfectly good case. With this in mind I thought I might do a piece on where you can find some of the modding components locally as well as pre-modded cases. We might not have the selection of components available elsewhere in the world, but we do have some and it is less expensive to get what we have locally than import it from overseas. Unfortunately if you want to get real fancy with your case, i.e. multi-coloured cathodes and glow tape, you still have to import.

Fans and heatsinks are quite easy to get, be it from your local computer retailer or distributor. Rectron is a good start and stock a lot of CoolerMaster fans and heatsinks. UltraCool and CyberDyne both carry copper heatsinks and fans with thermal sensors that can regulate their own speed for hardcore enthusiasts. Not everyone needs these, which can be quite expensive, and if you aren't going to overclock your system, normal

Here is a list of sites that deal exclusively with case mods. They are a good resource if you have gone past the window, light, and cooling stage and are looking for ideas to mod your case even further.

<http://www.virtual-hideout.net/>  
<http://www.twistedmods.com/>  
<http://www.voidedwarranty.com/>  
<http://www.deviantmods.com/>

Windows and window kits are quite hard to come by locally and most people opt to have their own Perspex windows cut. In the end it is cheaper and looks just as good as a window kit. If you must have a window the only local place I have seen any are at a site called modbox located at [www.modbox.co.za](http://www.modbox.co.za). The site at

Soyo Dragon Ultra Platinum KT333 Motherboard : ESRP R1700.00  
Soyo Dragon Ultra Platinum KT400 Motherboard : ESRP R1900.00  
Coolermaster Platinum Floppy Cables : ESRP R110.00  
Coolermaster Platinum ATA133 HDD Cables : ESRP R180.00  
Arkua AMD Athlon and P4 Heatsinks : ESRP : R300.00  
Stainless Steel Laser Cut Fan Guards : Small (60mm Fan) R60.00  
Medium (80mm Fan) R75.00  
Large (120mm Fan) R105.00



## logitech freedom 2.4 cordless joystick

One of the biggest problems with gaming (whether because of limited desk space or particularly crowded LAN sessions) is that controller cords always get in the way. Always. Take, for example, a good Battlefield 1942 session, where, if you really take it seriously, you have a mouse, keyboard and joystick on your desk. That gets a bit messy, especially when you need to shift your joystick out of the way, or move your keyboard, or whatever. Of course, having a cordless keyboard and mouse setup helps, but the joystick has always had that overly short cord that gets tangled, hooked and ultimately, ruins your kill rate. Not anymore.

Personally, I have never seen a cordless joystick before - but the editor does treat me like a mushroom, so I may be wrong here. But, in my eyes, the Logitech Freedom 2.4 Cordless Joystick is a revolutionary device.

It is, for all intents and purposes, a joystick. But that horrible cord is gone, leaving you with a device that doesn't clutter your gaming environment, and can be put just about anywhere - hell, can even be used just about anywhere, thanks to its six meter range. It can be easily stashed out of the way, and quickly grabbed when needed - no mess, no fuss, as they say in the advertising world.

In terms of design... very pretty, I must say. The first thing that struck me was the stick's base - which really looks more like a flattened tripod. The stability issues that sprang up in my mind do not exist. Knocking this baby over, even during the most vigorous play, is nigh impossible.

And it's covered in non-slip rubber (which is quite hard, but definitely does the trick.)

Overall, the stick has a sturdy construction, with non-slip surfaces in all the right places. 10 comfortably positioned buttons, a throttle

(which is more accurate than others I have used) and a hat switch make up the sticks control options, as well as a sensitive and comfortable... well, stick.

Compared to most joysticks, the Logitech Freedom 2.4 is quite compact. The reason for this is the lack of force feedback - my one big problem with the stick. While force feedback isn't everything, it has become something of an industry standard. Then again, if you were to add force feedback to a cordless stick, you enter a whole new field of problems - new receivers that are also transmitters (and vice versa) and, very importantly, a larger size and much heavier weight... which are things that were purposely avoided in the design of this device.

If you need to minimise the mess, and don't mind not having your arm wrenched off by a game controller, then this stick is a great consideration. It is wonderfully practical.

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
No clutter	No force feedback
Stable	Price
Sturdy	

SUPPLIED BY: Workgroup (011) 203 9100  
PRICE: R 999.00  
INTERNET: [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

## logitech mx700 cordless mouse

Technology is a wonderful thing - even though it is pretty difficult to keep up with. But there are some times when just plain old "street smarts" can go a long way too. Take, for example, the Logitech MX700 Cordless Mouse.

Now, there is nothing particularly new about the cordless mouse concept. Virtually everyone is making them these days and, as a consumer, you either love 'em or you hate 'em. The whole thing comes down to design innovation now, with everyone trying to get smaller and more comfortable without compromising the technology needed to power one of these devices.

Sadly, despite advances in transmission technology and the like, no-one has been able to get past the whole battery issue. This is the one factor that keeps the mouse larger. But that's generally okay, because most cordless mice are designed with comfort in mind. The big pain is the fact that you need to replace the batteries every so often.

Not anymore.

Enter the Logitech MX700 Cordless Optical Mouse. It enters the fray with one massive advantage - one that sets it very securely above the rest of the cordless mice (mouses, meese) out there... it comes equipped with rechargeable batteries.

So, big deal - you still have to yank the things out, right? Wrong! Those clever people at Logitech included a recharge "docking" port with the mouse, housed in the system's receiver unit. Basically, when you're not using your PC, simply cradle the mouse unit in the docking port and there you go - it recharges while you sleep (or bath, or whatever.)

This one small factor - what I think of as the "street-smart" bit in this device's design - sets it far apart.

Aside from the recharging thing, the MX700 is one of the most comfortable and aesthetically appealing input devices I have ever seen. It has a solid feel to it, and is

molded (for the most part) out of a strong, non-slip material. The principle buttons are "invisible" - there are no tell-tale gaps marking the buttons - and it has a total of 8 (count 'em) buttons for the user to enjoy, and programme as

you see fit, to suit your gaming purposes.

The mouse captures 4.7 megapixels every second, using new 800 dpi sensor technology. In other words, it's sensitive and accurate. It is a bit heavy, but then again it's meant for sliding, not shot put, so there isn't too much of a problem there.

What is really heavy is the price. The mouse tips the scales at around R1200.00, which is rather steep for an input device. However, its new technology, added to overall Logitech reliability, means that you probably will never have to buy another mouse again. Or, for that matter, endless packs of batteries.



REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Recharger	Usual cordless issues
8 buttons	Price
Sensitive	

SUPPLIED BY: Workgroup (011) 203 9100  
PRICE: R 1299.00  
INTERNET: [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

## creative pc-cam 750

It seems that Creative Labs are becoming pro-active again in South Africa and this month we received their new webcam come digital camera for review.



The new camera comes with a sleek design reminiscent of 35 mm cameras and features a metallic grey finish which looks stylish in both home and office. In the retail package you will find the PC-CAM 750, Monitor Stand, a USB Connection Cable, Manual, and assorted software on CD which include the PC-CAM Center for quick and easy camera management, WebCam Control, WebCam Monitor for use when the camera is connected to a PC, as well as value added software such as Ulead PhotoExpress and Ulead VideoStudio. The PC-CAM 750 features an optical resolution of 1024x768 via the CCD and a software enhanced resolution of 1600x1200 using interpolation giving it a still picture resolution of 2.1 megapixels. There are three selectable image sizes when capturing stills - 1600x1200 allowing you to store 20 pictures on the built-in memory, 1024x768 (85 images) and 640x480 (200 images). Unfortunately the PC-CAM 750 is limited in its use as a digital camera since it can't take any extra memory using a flash card and would require you to clean out the built-in memory when ever it is full. For optimal lighting quality the PC-CAM comes with a built-in flash which can either be operated automatically or manually and has a red-eye reduction mode for when you take facial snapshots.

Another bonus feature includes the self timer, although it seems that this is becoming standard on most digital cameras being released lately. When functioning as a WebCam the PC-CAM 750 can capture and transmit video at a resolution of up to 640x480 in 16.7 million colours. That is exactly double the size (actually 4x if you get technical) of the previous generation webcams from Creative Labs. The only quirky aspect of the PC-CAM can be found in its implementation as a webcam since it slots into a monitor stand with a heavy base to achieve stability due to its light weight. The PC-CAM 750 comes standard with a built-in microphone that can be used for video conferencing when using it as a webcam. The mic can also be utilized to capture up to 60 minutes of compressed audio when used as a digital camera making it nice to take pictures and record an interview at the same time without having to lug along an MP3 player or similar device.

Another handy although be it "short" feature is the cameras ability to capture 75 seconds of video at a resolution of 352x288 and 15 fps with audio when not connected to a computer. Overall the PC-CAM 750 is not a bad webcam/camera combination with excellent resolution and image quality on par with the rest of the market. All functions are easily accessible via the small greyscale LCD on the back, although you can't preview pictures. The PC-CAM has a recommended retail price of R 2199.00 and should be one of your considerations if you are in the market for a webcam/digital camera combo.

I won't outright suggest it since most new combos are of similar spec when comparing in the same price bracket, they just look different but functionality is mainly similar across the board.

REVIEWED BY	
Leonard "DarkSkies" Diamond	
PLUS	MINUS
Stylish design	No extra memory option
Good resolution	Quirky base stand
Dual functionality	

**SUPPLIED BY:** Creative Labs SA (011) 805 0188  
**PRICE:** R 2199.00  
**INTERNET:** asia.creative.com

## kalliba removable usb flash

One of the biggest problems I personally encounter in working for a publication such as this is the easy transfer of data. When working at home, one needs a convenient way to move data from the home PC to the office PC. The three options that are readily available are e-mail, writeable CD-Roms or floppy disks, each of which have their problems: e-mail takes long and is costly (not to mention the occasional disconnection); writeable CD-Roms also cost a packet and generally have far more space than is needed, not to mention the fact that writing CDs can take an age; floppy disks are too small and are generally unreliable.

The solution to this problem comes in the form of the Kalliba Removable USB Flash, or the "memory stick" as we have taken to calling it.

Measuring only 85 millimeters in length and 24 millimeters in breadth (with its protective cap on) the Kalliba Removable USB Flash is capable of moving 16MB of information easily, reliably and quickly. The basic premise behind the device is simple: plug it into your USB port (Windows 98 users will need to install a driver) and, using any basic file manager, transfer information to it, or from it, in the usual way you would copy files. The computer detects the device as a removable disk and queues it up at the end of your designated drives. Simple as that!

But the Kalliba Removable USB Flash has more going for it than just being an utterly convenient way to move smaller files around. It features a write-protection switch (much like the tabs you would find on floppy-disks) as well as built-in password protection, to ensure that your

files don't get meddled with. The device can be plugged into any machine that supports USB, and is even Mac compatible. It requires no external power, is easily reusable, and can even be used as a boot disk. Its data transfer rates are comparable with the fastest devices out there. Certainly they are faster than any floppy disk or CD writing process, and data on locked units can be stored for as long as you like with no risk of degradation, scratching or similar mishaps.

But wait, there's more! The Kalliba Removable USB Flash is available in a variety of storage capacities - 16MB, 32MB, 64MB, 128MB, 256MB, 512MB and 1GB are available (although we will have to wait a while to see the larger storage capacity devices on our shores). It even has a convenient cord which can be used to hang the memory stick around your neck for easy and safe transporting of the device - it's so light you hardly even know its there.

This is one of the most massively practical devices I have ever seen for the PC. While it may not relate directly to gaming, it still warrants a mention - devices like this can be used by anyone, for any number of reasons (as long as data needs to be moved around.)

The 16MB device weighs in at a paltry R215.00, with larger devices costing proportionately more. It may seem a little steep at first, but if you consider the re-usability of the device, the long term savings that it offers become obvious. Use them as data storage devices, and you will be paying a lot - but the moving of data is a different matter entirely.

Overall, I must say that I am very impressed with this item. The practicality of the device cannot be overstated; it certainly has made my life a hell of a lot easier, as I am sure it will do for a great many others!



REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Compact	Initially expensive
Easy to use	
Long term money saver	

**SUPPLIED BY:** Axiz [011] 237 7000  
**PRICE:** R 215.00 (16MB Version)  
**INTERNET:** www.kalliba.com

## benq v991 19" crt mprii monitor

14 inches just isn't enough. 15 inches solely exists to make 14 inches look bad. 17 inches should keep the masses happy. And 21 inches are really just for those who like to brag. No, in a perfect world, everyone should have 19 inches.



Another offering this month for review from BenQ is the V911, the smaller brother to the P211 21" monitor. Apart from not bending my desk into oblivion, I also prefer a 19" monitor. For one, it's not as invasive as a colossal 21", but it allows you to actually see things comfortably at 1280x1024. Not to mention that carting a 19" to a LAN is no big deal, though 17" is still better for that. In short, a 19" monitor is just fine. Problem is that they don't come cheap. You can pay anything between R3000 and R12000 for a 19" monitor, depending on what you want. But the average monitor will set you back around R5000 and take you up to 1600x1280.

BenQ's v991 gives you the same range of resolution, but at a more cost-effective R2799. It comes with a large set of options to tweak, including bending the corners of the display. The manufacturers opted for more buttons than less, though, and it's not quite as convenient as the single-button interface most screens have. Visually there's not much at fault here. The monitor comes with two colour temperatures: 9300k and 6500k (the brighter of the two). The display remains clear on the highest resolution. The performance isn't that great with games, though. What works for Windows seems to not do the job in some of the titles I've tried. Colours appear glary and there seems to be a lack of definition with a lot of shading. This can be corrected to a degree, though, with the monitor settings, but it's a bother to constantly change your setting depending on whether you're in a game or in Windows. Its fine with a game such as Battlefield 1942, since your textures are mostly grimy, but when you load up something as flashy as Hot Pursuit 2, the quality difference is quite obvious. As far as an actual gaming monitor goes, you might want to spend a little more, but as far as desktop work and such goes, this model is fine. Let me put it this way, you get worse for more, and this isn't a bad option for the price it retails for.

REVIEWED BY	
James "Loves the Pain" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Great price	Not flat screen
Crisp display	

SUPPLIED BY: TVR Computers (011) 807 1390  
PRICE: R 2799.00  
INTERNET: [www.benq.com](http://www.benq.com)

## benq p211 21" crt mprii monitor

To 21-Inch or not to 21-Inch. That really is the question. While a 21-Inch monitor seems like one of the best accessories for a gamer that money can buy, it does come with its drawbacks. First and foremost is the usual pricetag that comes with this lot, since a middle-range monitor can cost you around R10 000. Then there is the matter that they are simply huge. A 21-Inch takes up a load of desk space, and it's not exactly something you can carry to LANs either. This model in its box barely fitted in my car! Granted, I do have a small car...

Nonetheless, while they are big, expensive, and pretty much destined to wherever you managed to slam them down, a 21-Inch is a certain treat, especially if you like things big and in your face. For graphic design or anything that requires working with large graphic files, it's simply a must - you can't wave a stick at how much extra desktop space you get at higher resolutions. But that price is still elusive.

That's where BenQ's offering, the P211, comes in. This monster of a screen won't set you back more than R7,000, but those who have shopped for screens before are already cautious, since going cheap on screens is most often where you pay the most. The first sacrifice is usually screen quality, or a lack of resolutions.

The P211 goes up to a merry 1920x1440, which is pretty big. At this res, though, the font text is still crisp and very readable. Icons are also very visible, and there isn't any obvious loss of quality. There doesn't seem to be any colour fading either. It supports 60, 70, 75 and 85hz frequencies, and at the top resolutions, this limits to 60 and 75hz. Overall I counted 12 varying resolutions, the lowest being 800x600.

To nitpick a few problems, the display isn't brilliant. There seem to be fine lines on the display, but this doesn't seem to be a bother. The monitor isn't a flatscreen either, but that's more of a personal preference. My real problem lies with the monitor control panel. Spread over three pages, the controls make it a bit awkward to work with, especially if you are used to a one-button interface,

such as on a Viewsonic monitor. The options make up for it, though. There are more things to tweak and mess with, and a hefty manual covers them all. One thing I couldn't fix was to get games to run at full screen. It seems that they insist on only appearing over a part of the monitor, roughly the size a 19" would take up. Movies, such as DVDs, run fine and I didn't experience any graininess or loss of quality. In the end, though, if you are prepared to spend money on a 21-Inch, you can't let one review make up your mind for you.

When it comes to hardware like this, you need to test it out before you buy. But definitely put the P211 on your list. It's priced very well, and there doesn't seem to be anything that detracts from making it a great monitor.



REVIEWED BY	
James "Square Eyes" Francis	
PLUS	MINUS
Fair price	Poor gaming performance
Crisp display	

SUPPLIED BY: TVR Computers (011) 807 1390  
PRICE: R 6999.00  
INTERNET: [www.benq.com](http://www.benq.com)

## shock 2 "spiderman" controller

The world is full of bandwagons. And most people out there are, at very least, hitch-hiking at the side of the bandwagon highway. Take this controller, for example. The people who designed this one clearly had Spiderman crazy kids in mind, and knew that said kids would nag incessantly until frustrated parents just gave up and bought it for them. On the upside, there is no way on God's green earth that you could ever lose this controller - it's far too loud for that.

Looks aside - although you still can't help but notice it, even in peripheral vision, what we have is a rather good controller for PlayStation and PlayStation 2.

The first impression that this controller gave is the fact that it feels solid. Not just strong, but solid - capable of putting up with any amount of abuse. This is not a flimsy piece of hardware - I wasn't allowed to try a truck test, but I am sure it would have passed.

Despite the high gloss finish of the controller's face, it is not at all slippery. The whole back side of the controller is made out of non-slip plastic, and the palm supports have great non-slip pads on them - those bright blue bits. Even the buttons have a non-slip feel, which helps when the action gets your hands sweating.



Overall, the response of the controller is good - there is no "lag" or iffy directional issues with this one. Using it will definitely not affect your gaming adversely, because it is comfortable (though a little big) and the buttons are sensibly placed - especially the shoulder buttons, which curve around the edge of the controller a little, for easier access. And while most independently manufactured controllers have D-pads that make choosing direction a little tricky, this device's ridged D-pad is comfortable and accurate. The analog sticks are also very comfortably placed. They are placed lower on the controller, for added control and less thumb-cramp... the curse of all console gamers!

My only real complaint is that the cord is shorter than that of the original PlayStation 2 controller. Of course, this is just nit picking, but longer cords are preferable. Not that it's a train smash, because it is not much shorter - only a few centimeters, really. On the whole, I must admit that I enjoyed using the "Spiderman" controller. Its colour scheme is not exactly in my taste, but, then again, kitsch is cool these days. If you like the colour scheme (or are trying to be trendy) then this is a controller you should seriously consider. It certainly beats a lot of the junk on the market.

REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Sturdy	Gaudy
Comfortable	Slightly shorter cable
Non-slip	

**SUPPLIED BY:** World Web Ent. (011) 462 0150  
**PRICE:** R 199.00  
**INTERNET:** www.wwc.co.za

## extreme 3d system

Whenever something comes in for review, we attempt to approach it with an unbiased opinion. However, seeing yet another set of glasses designed to make your essentially 2D gaming experience a vital and vibrant 3D one, I must admit that I felt an initial trepidation. I connected the system to my PC - via an adaptor that plugs into your video card, with your monitor plugging into said adaptor - and started up a session of Unreal Tournament 2003. And for the first time, I finally saw what they were getting at... and I was amazed. For the first time, I realised what the fuss was about, and I got to experience 3D gaming as it was intended.

Where many have fallen short of the mark, the Extreme 3D system passes with flying colours. But there really is nothing different about the hardware. The system is comprised of the same kind of monitor adaptor, and the same kind of 3D glasses (those that flicker alternately at a very high rate). I really could see nothing new here until I realised that the problem doesn't lie in the hardware - it never has.

When installing the system, a new option is given on the driver disk of the Extreme 3D

system: Nvidia Stereo Drivers. And where other products may have had this driver before, they weren't quite as insistent on its installation as this one is, resulting in poor performance - after all, if something is needed for a hardware system to work, the end-user must be made painfully aware of the fact.

It seems that this driver makes all the difference. Instead of an "almost" 3D effect, this driver produces a visual quality that will have the user diving sideways to avoid enemy rockets.

The Extreme 3D system is the first to have an affiliation with Nvidia, whose logo appears on the product's box. This seems to have created the solution to the problems that this kind of technology offers, but does raise other issues. You can only use this device if your video card has an Nvidia chipset. Probably not a big problem, if Nvidia's popularity is anything to go by, but there are ATI users out there who are bound to complain.

However, it does seem to have been the right direction to take. I can't say for sure that this is the first system that has included these drivers, but it certainly is the first one that has advertised the fact, thereby creating an awareness with the end user that results in perfect performance.

Other software included in the bundle allows for 3D television viewing (if you have the luxury of a TV card) as well as a static graphic adapter, turning JPEGs and the like into 3D images, as well as an Internet adapter, for 3D web surfing. Also, a bonus 15 games are included with

the device - not triple A titles, mind you, but fun ones none the less.

Basically, the Extreme 3D system has hit the mark where others have failed - not through a better hardware device, but through better drivers (once again demonstrating the value of updating your system software.) I don't think competitive gamers are going to flock to this device, but it does enhance the game - my head shot rate was better, but maybe that was just coincidence.



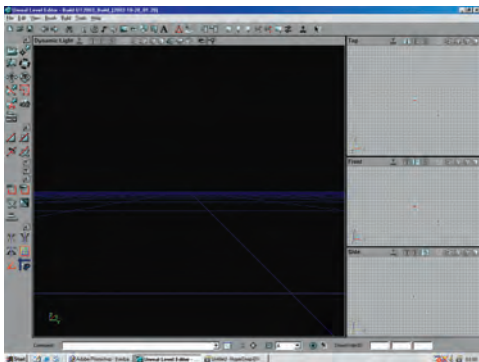
REVIEWED BY	
Walt "Shryke" Pretorius	
PLUS	MINUS
Actually works	Eye strain
Improved "depth" perception	Not spectacle-friendly
	Price

**SUPPLIED BY:** Chromatech 3D (011) 958-1924  
**PRICE:** R 1450.00  
**INTERNET:** www.x3dworld.com

# editing for unreal tournament 2003:

## chapter one - basic training

So many games these days release level editors as part of the package and while some of them are fun, it's the levels for first person shooters that are always the most impressive. But with virtually every game making use of a different level-editing program, it can get a little confusing. Long time readers of NAG may remember the series we published for the Quake 3 level editor - well, here we go again, only this time we are taking a look at the editor bundled with Unreal Tournament 2003. Enjoy...



▲ The basic interface

When you first open the Unreal Editor interface, you will most certainly be faced with a whole bunch of really confusing tools and view-ports. I know I was. But, in truth, this editor is one of the most user friendly level-editing programs I have come across in a long time. With all the features and help that the program provides, it is relatively easy to create awesome looking levels in very little time at all.

But we need to crawl before we walk. This series will be written with the assumption that you are a complete newbie to Unreal Level editing, and each chapter will follow on from the last. So, if you have some experience with this program, please bear with us slow pokes while we go through each step required to create awesome Unreal Tournament 2003 levels.

### Basic Concepts

There are basically two kinds of level-editing programs out there: additive and subtractive programs. With additive programs, the architecture of the level is created by building up the geometry. In other words, when you begin you are presented with a large "void" in which to build your level. Subtractive programs work the other way around. There you begin with a large "solid" area, and the level is created by "carving" sections out of it, much like a sculptor might create a masterpiece from a block of marble. Each of these systems has benefits and advantages, but I am not going to discuss them here. All you need to know from this point onwards is that the Unreal Editor is a subtractive system. This is important, because you may have to approach levels a little differently than you may be used to.

Now let's take a look at the basic interface. What we are faced with when starting up the program is something very similar to a 3D animation program. On the left hand side we have the vertical Building Tool Bar. These tools will help us create our level. Beneath the standard windows menu bar we have the horizontal

Program Function Bar, which we use to spruce up our level, add elements and test

it. And then we have our workspace, which is comprised of four panels, each showing a different view of the level we are building: Top, Front, Side and Preview - or more correctly, Orthographic. The layout of these four boxes can be changed under the View menu item - I personally prefer the layout with one large viewport, and three small ones. Seeing as all my screenshots are going to be in this mode, I thought it only fair to tell you.

On these pages you will find box guides to what the various tools are called. Please refer to them, as I will be using the tool names rather than icons to describe them.

There will also be a large dialogue box on screen. This is the interface for choosing textures, mesh items and the like. You can minimise that for now - we'll get back to it later.

One important thing you need to remember is moving around in the various viewpoints, because you will need to do a lot of this. In any of the views, except orthographic, simply holding down the left mouse button (LMB from now on) and moving the mouse. Easy. In fact, either mouse button will have this effect. However, in the orthographic view, things are a little different. Holding down the LMB in this view and moving the mouse forward and backward will move your camera in the same direction. Moving the mouse from side to side will cause the camera to turn. A right mouse button hold (RMB) will cause the camera to turn with no movement, no matter where you move the mouse - thereby allowing you to tilt your view in the vertical plain. Holding both mouse buttons will allow you to move along the vertical plain (forward and backward mouse movement) or the horizontal plain (side to side mouse movement) without any rotation.

### Enough Talk, Let's Build Already!

Although the above information may seem rather boring, it is important. However, we all want to get building, so here goes.

Let's start with a basic room. What we need to do is tell the program the dimensions of the room. So, step one: right click on the Cube Tool icon. You will be presented with a dialogue box, as pictured. We need to enter a value for our room's height, width and breadth. Keep this factor in mind: a height of 256 is comfortable for the character to run in, but does not leave much jump room. Rockets in such a low space would be deadly!

However, for purposes of this first chapter, we are going to make our "room" 256 all round. Once all the correct numbers have been entered, hit the build button, and then close the cube's dialogue box. You will now be able to see a red wire-frame cube on all of your views. Now just simply hit the Subtract Tool icon, and there you have it - a room. A rather bland, boring room, but a room none the less!

To make our room a little more interesting, let's add some textures to it. Click on the Texture Browser icon to bring up the texture interface. Not all textures are



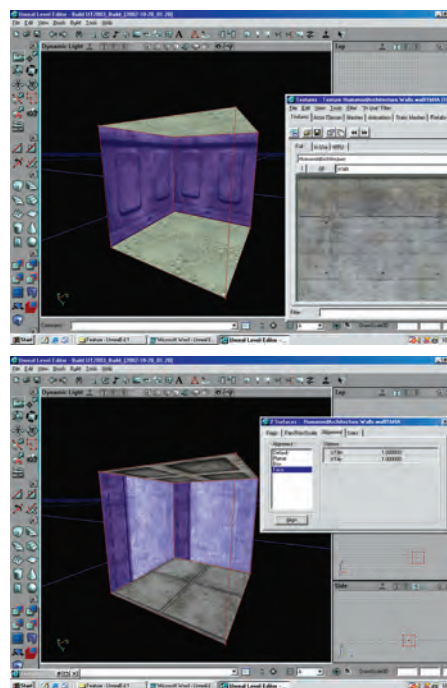
### program function tools

- 1 Actor Class Browser
- 2 Group Browser
- 3 Music Browser
- 4 Sound Browser
- 5 Texture Browser
- 6 Mesh Browser
- 7 Prefab Browser
- 8 Static Mesh Browser
- 9 Animation Browser
- 10 2D Editor
- 11 Unreal Script Editor
- 12 Actor Properties
- 13 Surface Properties
- 14 Build Geometry
- 15 Build Lighting
- 16 Build Changed Lighting
- 17 Build Paths
- 18 Build Changed Paths
- 19 Build All
- 20 Build Options
- 21 Play Map

loaded automatically, so you will need to select a file and open it (you know, File, Open, etc.) I am going to use HumanoidArchitecture.utx for this tutorial, but feel free to look at any of the other textures. Remember, though, that some may not work very well...

Once your file has loaded, you will see that there are various categories available for use; floors, walls, ceilings, and so on. Pick the appropriate category, and left-click on the surface you want to apply the texture to in the orthographic view port - it will turn blue - before clicking on the texture you want to apply. You will see that your texture is applied to the surface immediately. You can also select multiple surfaces by

### ▼ Apply and modify textures



## windows 98

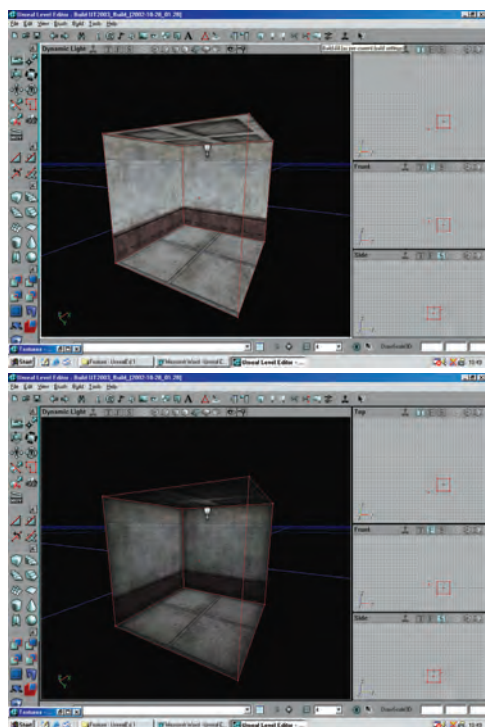
Those of you using Windows 98 will not be able to initialise the editing program until you have applied patch version 2136 (the first patch.) Also make sure that your colour setting for your desktop is on 32 bit True Colour.

## size does matter

**This is important!** The Unreal Editor does not work well with sizes given in odd numbers. In other words, 256 is fine, but 255 or 257 are going to cause problems!

holding down the CTRL key while clicking on them. Obviously you don't have to apply floor textures to floors only, but they do look better if kept in the right categories.

Textures are built to a set size, and they may appear incorrect when first applied to a surface. To remedy this, select the surfaces which need to be altered, and



▲ Lighting, before and after the "build" function is used

then hit the F5 key or select the Surface Properties icon. This will bring up the Surface Adjustment dialogue box. The first thing to do is align your textures: click on the align tab, choose your type of alignment and apply. You may then need to rotate, pan or shift your textures around, which can be achieved by using the tools on the Pan/Rotate/Scale tab. Rotating turns them, panning moves them around, and scaling resizes them. Try a few options out - you can't break anything.

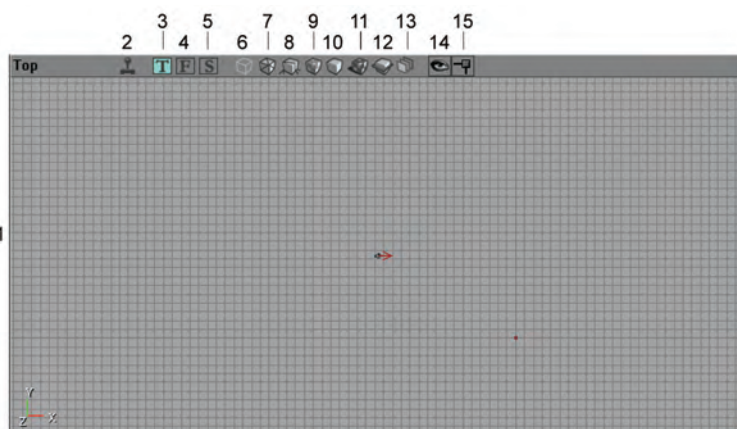
### Finishing Touches

Once your room has been created, it is almost time to check it out. But we first need to add a light, and a

place for your character to spawn from. These are both very simply achieved. First, the light. Right click on any surface (preferably the ceiling, for now) and select Add Light Here. An icon will appear in all the views indicating that a light has been added to your map. Now click on either the Build Lighting or Build All tools (I prefer Build All) and see how your room has changed in the orthographic view. Use the Dynamic Light View for this... it works best as a preview. Please note that this is just a generic light - there are better ways to light rooms, which we will look at next time.

Now right click on the floor of your room. Select Add Player Start Here, and click on Build All again. There you go... save your map, select Play Map, and check out your first room! Be sure to have the Unreal Tournament 2003 CD in your drive, or it won't initialise your map.

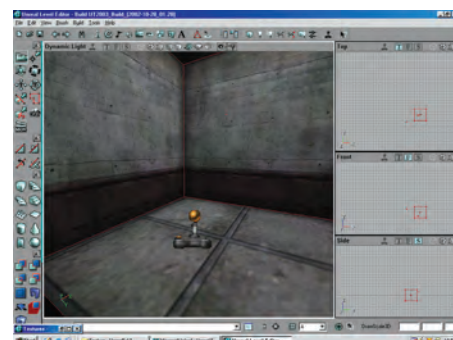
Sadly that's all we have space for this time around. Keep trying this, with different room sizes and textures. Next time we will look at, among other things, multiple rooms, lighting effects and static meshes. Until then, happy building!



## building tools

These tools are used in the actual construction process of your level.

- 1 Camera Movement
- 2 Vertex Editing
- 3 Actor Scaling
- 4 Actor Rotate
- 5 Texture Scaling
- 6 Texture Rotate
- 7 Brush Clipping
- 8 Freehand Polygon Drawing
- 9 Drag Face
- 10 Terrain Editing
- 11 Matinee
- 12 Clip Selected Brushes
- 13 Split Selected Brushes
- 14 Flip Clipping Normal
- 15 Delete Clip Markers
- 16 Cube
- 17 Curved Staircase
- 18 Spiral Staircase
- 19 Linear Staircase
- 20 BSP Based Terrain
- 21 Sheet
- 22 Cylinder
- 23 Cone
- 24 Volumetric
- 25 Tetrahedron (Sphere)
- 26 Add
- 27 Subtract
- 28 Intersect
- 29 Deintersect
- 30 Add Special Brush
- 31 Add Static Mesh
- 32 Add Mover
- 33 Add Antiportal
- 34 Volume
- 35 Show Selected Actors Only
- 36 Hide Selected Actors
- 37 Show All Actors
- 38 Invert Selection
- 39 Change Camera Speed
- 40 Blank Space... just checking if you're reading this!
- 41 Mirror X
- 42 Mirror Y
- 43 Mirror Z
- 44 Select All Inside
- 45 Clip Z in Wireframe
- 46 Align View on Actor



▲ A Player Start indicator - without it, it's just an empty room

## viewport tools

- 1 Work Area
- 2 Realtime Preview
- 3 Top View
- 4 Front View
- 5 Side View
- 6 Perspective
- 7 Texture Usage
- 8 BSP Cuts
- 9 Textured
- 10 Lighting Only
- 11 Dynamic Light
- 12 Zone / Portal
- 13 Depth Complexity
- 14 Lock to Selected Actor
- 15 Show Large Vertices



#### www.ea.co.za

##### Local flavoured gaming

Electronics Arts Africa opened their local site to back their huge selection of games. The site comes in two flavours: EA Games and EA Sports. While we're sure we don't have to explain the difference, it is a great way to split the catalogue into the two big sections. In the sports section you'll find all those titles that EA is famed for sports-wise, such as FIFA, F1 and the EA BIG series.

Head over to the Games side of things for their more conventional titles, such as the Command & Conquer series, Medal of Honor and Bond, to name a few. It also covers their console titles coming out for the PlayStation 2 and GameCube. In short, if you need to find out about EA's local games, this is where you need to be.

#### www.comedy-zone.net

##### Have a laugh on us

Need a laugh? Goodness knows we all do every now and again. And if you are a netizen, finding something funny is not hard, if you know where to go. There are tons of sites out there that deliver on jokes, and Comedy Zone caters for all. Being a large comedy hub, it's got everything you'd want - jokes, quotes, puns, pictures, links and even a shop to get comedy gear for yourself or someone else. There are wind-up calls, audio files, and a place to learn useless trivia. For instance, even though New Zealand has the most sheep per capita in the world, it only boasts 20 sheep per person. The lucky lads on the Falkland Isles, with over 700,000 sheep to 2,000 people get 350 each!

The last reason why you should bookmark this site is its stand-up comedian resource, which links you to official sites, fansites and interviews on a lot of famous and upcoming comedians.

**www.herzeleid.com**  
**Rammstein, and then some**  
 Rammstein - love them or hate them, but few of us really understand them, except German people, who don't seem to like them. Despite this little paradox, they are still very German and very alternative. The official site is okay, but it doesn't really give you everything, in particular worthwhile English material such as translations of their songs. In comes Herzeleid, probably the best Rammstein fansite around. It has a lot on the band, including a huge gallery of photos, interviews, concert reviews, a shop that has everything a fan would want (including rare limited CDs) and a lyrics section with very

complete translations and explanations.

It's a one-stop-Rammstein-fan shop, and it's just as great if you know somebody annoying who happens to love the band - this will keep them occupied for hours while you get to watch TV in peace...

#### www.reslifecomics.com

##### Resident Life at its weirdest

You know, we could only feature webcomics in this section, and we'd never run out of content, because just as you think you've seen them all, a new one appears. And not new as in 'just arrived'. You just never knew about it before...

Resident Life is the latest in this category of undiscovered gems, and is a great read in the tradition of college strips, complete with beer, girls and gamers. Live through Dave and Skeet's college careers as they play games, drink beer, meet girls, drink beer, write exams, drink beer, avoid crazy psychotic former girlfriends, drink beer, and drink soda (when they don't have beer).

Updated every day, it's a full-colour strip and a great one at that. Bookmark it now.

#### quick hits

##### www.entrances2hell.co.uk

AC/DC said they were on the Highway to Hell. But if they took the time to read this site, they'd have known that the way to Hell is not the wide row. Instead, it's a bunch of obscure entrances all over the world. Entrances 2 Hell catalogues these, and even gives you cool site knowledge, like when Satan slipped in ice, breaking his ankle. Yes, it isn't a serious site.

##### www.molehillgroup.com/annoying/

Building a bad website is easy - just use Frontpage or something similar. But to build an annoying website takes time and talent, and you'll have to know what you are doing. Lucky for you these chaps are releasing a book on it, and they also reveal bits and pieces of this 'art' on the website, such as choosing bad colours, the wrong art and other sins of the web. If it inspires you, don't send us your link.

##### www.miniclip.com

##### Why work when you can play?

What with most corporate places having net links, who'd want to work? But you'll need something else to do, and you can play and beat Solitaire while in a coma. So what's next?

Well, how about some paintball? Or penguin-hitting? Maybe watch George W. Bush dance, or ask the Guru stupid questions... These options and more await you at Miniclip, a flash games site of note. Their programs are fast loading, fun, and high quality, not to mention great wastes of time. Some games demand a certain score before it allows you to the next level, and the creators have worked hard to have a

**BUILDING REALLY ANNOYING WEB SITES**  
 Building Really Annoying Web Sites is a subversive new book from author Michael Miller. This is a tongue-in-cheek, hands-on guide to all those annoying effects you've seen on other pages, and secretly wanted on your own site.  
 Author: Michael Miller  
 Publisher: No Starch Press  
 ISBN: 1-904-999-00-0  
 Page Count: 241 pp.  
 ISBN: 1-904-999-00-0  
 Published: Summer 2001  
 Click the buttons below to learn more about this book, access examples and code from the book, and order a copy of this book for your own personal use.  
 [ Home ] [ Buy This Book ] [ About the Book ] [ Contents ] [ Preface ] [ Examples & Code ] [ Graphics ] [ Code Snippets ] [ Good Links ]  
 Check out more books by this author at The No Starch Group.  
 Email the author at [www@no-starch.com](mailto:www@no-starch.com)

wide variety on offer, from the traditional point-and-shoot titles to sports games and even side-scrollers. In short, you might not get bored on Miniclip, but you do increase your odds to get fired. Then again, who'd want a job that won't allow you to play games?

## www.oldschool.org

### Old Skool! Get?

Finally a site that tributes the true classics! Old Skool.org is a tribute to the IBM PC game classics of the 80s. While you have hardcore Atari and Commodore enthusiasts constantly ranting about their gaming prowess, old school PC gamers are far more humble, but they have had more than their share of influence in the market. If anything is the Atari still around? No, it's all PC, baby! This site is a good place to get hold of 1980 retro classics, as well as finding



other resources, such as getting these antique programs to run on today's systems. The site also contains articles about gaming back then, a trivia section, and a shrine area that pays homage to some of the notable events of the decade, including the release of Digger and Captain Blood, copy protection's arrival and even an EA cover museum. It's nostalgia in an ugly site design, but who cares?



## search engines

Getting something on the Web is probably the hardest of all, but not if you know where to look. So reference our list of Search engines and see which will do the job for you...

### www.google.com

Officially the biggest search engine on the web. Google is fast and feature packed. It also has an excellent news and image search facility, as well as a caching feature of pages. While you are there, get the useful Googlebar.

### www.altavista.com

One of the oldest and grandest on the web, Altavista has changed a lot, and has been the forerunner with a lot of new features (such as locking out mature content and searching image libraries).

### www.astalavista.box.sk

This top security search engine is a bit infamous for also giving access to cracks and serials, but it has its legal uses too.

### www.ananzi.com

Ananzi is one of the best local search engines, but it's far from the best as far as the web goes. Still, it's worth a visit if you need specific local content.

### www.webcrawler.com

Webcrawler is also one of the older search engines around, though it's gone a bit backwards in the past few years. It still has one of the best and fastest interfaces, though.

### www.askjeeves.com

AskJeeves's claim to fame is being a straight-forward search engine. In short, ask it a question and it will answer accordingly. This isn't the best way to search, but it's great for beginners.

### www.yahoo.com

Yahoo is still one of the biggest sites in the world, and their search engine has a large role in that. Yahoo has huge listings and groups as well, so simply by browsing its own archives will get you a lot of information you might need.

### www.alltheweb.com

All The Web is considered as the best on the web, next to Google. It's fast, and has a XML interface that allows you to change font sizes, skins and other aspects to make the site suit your needs. Between AllTheWeb and Google you should find what you need.



by Jarred Krombein

**THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES - STER KINEKOR**

It's not a horror, but it's scary as hell, and it's not a thriller but trust me you will be sitting on the edge of your seat, in fact you will be jumping out of it more than sitting in it, because The Mothman Prophecies is one hell of a scary film. I don't get scared in anything and for a film like this to freak me out, trust me it's good. WARNING, as good as it is it is not everyone's taste. I was the only one in a group of friends who actually made it to the end, others walked out half way confused, and the rest were too freaked out by the nature of the story. It's about a man who loses his wife to some strange brain disease. Convinced it's more than what he is told, he sets off and somehow winds up in the small town of Point Pleasant, where sighting of a moth-like creature has been reported. His drive and curiosity leads him to investigate these sightings and at the same time searching to find out if there is any link between these sightings and his wife's death. Now before all you gore hounds and serial killer movie lovers run out to get this, let me tell you, the horror is built up in not what is shown, but by what is not shown. This film brilliantly stirs up the emotions and terror, by sounds and what we can't see, the hidden, the unknown. There are the few glimpses of the creature, but only enough to heighten our interest and get into that little pit in our stomach that tells us when something is wrong.

Please take note, when looking at the DVD sleeve it says nothing about special features but there are (Nothing special about them, but at least it's not a vanilla disk). We have interviews with Richard Gere, Laura Linney and Director Mark Pellington and a rather obscure music video called "Half Light". Don't be fooled by the cover stating HI- F1 stereo, it has 5.1 surround as well.

**STAR WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES - NU METRO**

The only way to see Star Wars was on the big screen; if you missed it, fool, but at least you could experience the excitement and power of this movie on your 51cm TV, NOT.

Now is it just me or do you also see a familiar trend with Star Wars? Episode 4 was the original, nothing can beat it, and then episode 5, was good but lacked that rush and excitement that we then saw in Episode 6. Now, Episode 1 was brilliant, yet Episode 2 is lacking that spark. It dwells too much on the love side of stuff and sub plots that really we didn't pay money to see. Let's just hope the trend continues and Episode 3 will blow us out of the water. Also when Episode 4, 5 and 6 were released it was a revelation and we really had nothing to compare it to. But with 1 and 2 we have had the likes of big budget films blasting their way onto our screen so the new films have a lot to live up to. Attack of the Clones (Episode 2) in its own little cocoon is a well-crafted, excellent movie. The story centers on Anakin Skywalker and his love for a certain woman. We see him testing the boundaries of his teachers and his power. We get a slight yet pivotal view of the inner struggles of Anakin and a hint of what will become of him. The Empire is in trouble again (what's new) and it's up to our heroes to save the day. The special features on the disk include "Specially created" deleted scenes, effects test and casting videos, the webisodes that ran as the movie was being made and many more.

**STUART LITTLE 2 - STER KINEKOR**

Stuart Little 2 is a sweet natured movie that is guilty of one thing. It alienates its audience. What I mean is, for those who saw SL 1, you will remember it being a funny, family movie, to be enjoyed by all ages, it didn't play down to any age group and was intelligent and provided a good 90 minutes of entertainment. This film doesn't come close to that. It tries to provide an adult side of entertainment, but these moments are few and far between. The animation and special effects are as top notch as before, but as adults we need more than looks. The running time is down to 75 minutes and the story line is one that even kids will see as a rip off of another old favourite story (watch it, I won't ruin the surprise). The story picks up from where we left off last time. Stuart is now a Little and is adjusting to life amongst the "Humans". Life is difficult for him as he tries to be part of the gang and adjusting to the big bad world is going to be harder than he thought. There are lots of references to size and those all-important lessons of its not how big or small you are, it's how big you are inside that counts. If I needed to learn that I'd watch Sesame Street (Takalani Sesame for our SABC viewers). All in all Stuart Little 2 does provide those odd moments of entertainment and at least it's something you can enjoy with the kids (it's not in any way one of those movies that has you tearing your hair out of boredom or stupidity). The DVD has some pretty cool special features. We have a Making of Special, Colouring Contest Photo Gallery, Read a long story, trailers, "Show and Tell" Interactive Feature and many more to keep those little ones amused for a few more hours.

**SNOW DOGS - NU METRO**

Why oh why do we always fall for it? We should know better, we have been tricked so many times before, but like lemmings we march on and sit and watch the movie and kick ourselves in the butt afterwards, promising we will never do it again, but wait we do, again and again. I'm talking about going to see a movie, because the trailer makes it look so funny. It's a Disney, so how bad can it be and it's about dogs and sleds and learning lessons about life. 90 or so minutes later I walk out butt sore and not amused, because the only funny bits in the movie were what was in the trailer and even some of what was in the trailer was not in the movie. It was slow and I could name at least 10 other movies with the same plot, just each one has a different story line. In the line of fire this time is Snow Dogs. I was bored and kept on hitting the fast forward button, when a clichéd moment approached (more of those than any other). Snow Dogs tells the story of a dentist who finds out that his parents adopted him and his real mother who lived in Alaska has just died and left him some items in her will. He packs his bags and heads out there to discover that he has inherited the house and all that is in it. This includes 6 sled dogs and one mutt. At first he has trouble getting on with the mutts but against adversity and courage he befriends them. Oh I forgot, he also learns to sled in no time (when everyone else takes a good few years to master the sport). He meets his wife, saves the day and every one is happy as Pooh Bear is to honey. Please take my advice, if a Disney film of late is not animated, walk straight passed. Not even the DVD has anything to write home about, the special features include, Ted's Artic Challenge game, Deleted Scenes (that's all we need more of in this movie), Chillin with actors and a few more. Don't waste your time, there is far more in entertainment to offer you out there than Snow Dogs.

**THE SCORPION KING - STER KINEKOR**

The choice is yours, 88 minutes or 165 minutes. These are the two versions that are available for you on this DVD. I must admit, I chickened out of the 165 minute version, and am pretty happy about that. The 90 minutes was long enough. It had great action scenes to keep the majority happy, but it just lacked the punch that I was expecting. It's my fault, maybe I had the hope of another Mummy type movie, filled with special effects, humor and action. What ever it was, I was disappointed. I also can't figure out what they could have cut from the movie to cut it from 165 minutes to 88. One day I will venture and find out. Don't expect the Scorpion King we saw in The Mummy Returns, this is the story of the start of the man/beast, and the only reason he is called the Scorpion King, is he has scorpion venom in him from an arrow soaked in it and he kills the current King and the village pronounce him the new one. 1 + 1 = ? It really is a lame way to tie it up and connect it with the previous outings. They should have just renamed the movie and the character and we would have had a much better film with far less expectations. This film plays out more like Conan the Barbarian or Rambo. The only reason I can think of was that it was riding on the success of The Mummy and hoped it would rope in the same audience. One problem the two films don't always share the same audience. The DVD lives up far better than the film, the special features include, Spotlight on Location, Music Video, The Special Effects, Shooting a Fighting Sequence and much more (let's not forget the 165 minute version). All in all it is a worthy film to have if you have the two Mummy films in your collection already.

by Walt Pretorius

**From Now On | Will Young**

UK Pop Idols winner Will Young has finally released his long awaited CD. After winning the competition and being rocketed to instant fame, Young has been eagerly watched by the industry, to see if the televised experiment will pay off - and this album is the true acid test. Judging by what one hears on this album, Young should go far. Well written original material performed very well and excellently produced is what you'll find here. In the end it's little more than light pop, but it is nice and relaxing stuff. **(BMG)**

**What My Heart Wants to Say | Gareth Gates**

Many people believe that there is no such thing as a second place winner, but Pop Idols runner up (from the UK series) Gareth Gates certainly is going to try and make a go of it. This album, his first, is his big shot at goal - but the album features little more than tired cover versions of songs we have heard a billion times before. Add to that the fact that Gates doesn't have the vocal charisma of Will Young, and we can easily see why he didn't have what it takes to win the competition. Now let's see how his album sells... **(BMG)**

**Definitive | INXS**

One of the bands that really made the sound of the late eighties and early nineties just so special was a group of rockers from Australia called INXS. With a career cut short with the untimely death of lead singer Michael Hutchence, INXS are now generally relegated to compilation albums and fond memories. However, this long overdue greatest hits collection will certainly revive the band's popularity. Tracks like Need You Tonight, Elegantly Wasted, Mystify and Suicide Blonde hold special places in the hearts of fans, and this particular album will provide a very nice, nostalgic amble down eighties lane. **(Universal)**

**Masters of Chant III | Gregorian**

The Gregorian Monks really must be having a great time - their success with their three albums has probably allowed them to build a swimming pool and private air strip (complete with Lear Jet) at the abbey. Hearing popular, contemporary songs interpreted by these guys, who have the voices of angels, is quite different... although the inclusion of tracks like Blasphemous Rumours is a little twisted. Other songs you will hear these masters perform on this most unusual collection include Fields of Gold, Sacrifice, Blue Monday and Wicked Game. This is really great stuff, especially for those who like their music a little unusual. **(Gallo)**

**Stars - The Best of the Cranberries 1992 - 2002 | The Cranberries**

For ten years, Irishmen Noel Hogan, Mike Hogan, Fergal Lawler and Dolores O'Riordan Burton, better known as The Cranberries, have been bringing their uniquely styled musical works to the listening public. It has been some time since we heard anything new from this band, and the release of this album could mark either a break-up or a triumphant return to the limelight. Great tracks like Dreams, Linger and Zombie can all be found on this album, as well as a great new single called Stars. This is a very aptly named CD, for The Cranberries have, through their decade long career, proved that they are indeed stars. **(Universal)**

**Let It Rain | Tracey Chapman**

When it comes to soulful, warm and utterly brilliant female vocalists, Tracey Chapman has, since the release of her first album many moons ago, been a constant and consistently brilliant performer. Whether her songs are rebellious freedom cries or sad love songs, her voice combined perfectly with excellent musical backing, to form a musical experience that is more than just pleasant listening. She can move mountains with her words, and can soothe savage beasts with her voice. This latest album goes far to further Chapman's career. She has matured, mellowed, and become even better than before... if that's possible. This is a great buy! **(Gallo)**

**Nirvana | Nirvana**

When Kurt Cobain took his own life (it seems like yesterday, but it was quite some time ago) every second angst ridden teenager suddenly became a Nirvana fan. They became flavour of the month, and the band knew fame and fortune like never before. Then the furor died down, and those little teenagers grew up (I hope). But they're back, at least with a long awaited greatest hits release, which also features a rather poor previously unreleased track. Nirvana were a revolution, a splinter in the eye of the accepted, and this album chronicles their radical departure from the norm (while still managing to maintain appeal) that crested the rise of grunge and propelled them to superstardom. 15 worthwhile tracks here. **(Universal)**

**One in a Million | Bosson**

It seems that guys like this are becoming dime-a-dozen. In fact, they actually have been for some time, but they used to belong to boy bands. Bosson's brand of Swedish vocal driven candy-pop, is filled with songs of love and sentiment that reflect his passion for music, which seems to have pushed him up on the playlists here in SA. He does some interesting things every now and then on the album, such as his current smash hits One in a Million, and I Believe which, if it is your thing, will have you humming quietly to yourself long after the song is over. **(RISA)**

**Big Beach Boutique II | Fatboy Slim [DVD]**

When it comes to the dance music scene, few names stand out like Fatboy Slim. Sadly, we haven't been able to see this mix-master in action in South Africa yet, but those of you who want to see his live show can opt for the next best thing. As with most music DVD releases, Big Beach Boutique II requires the user to have more than the average entertainment system if it is to be enjoyed to the full potential. Great sound and stunning video quality do seem to be a bit lost on your average TV system. This DVD, filmed during Fatboy Slim's recent Brighton Beach extravaganza, features 20 bass thumping live tracks, including some of this star's greatest hits. Special features include interviews, commentaries, and a special DJ Request section. This is a great addition to the music and DVD collection of any dance music fan - and with the right gear you could host a fantastic Fatboy Slim party! **(World Web Entertainment)**

**Right Here Right Now | Atomic Kitten [DVD]**

These three yummy Liverpoolian lasses put on a rather special stage show, and now you can experience it yourself at a price of less than a concert ticket. Besides which, DVD's allow you to pause, replay and experience the concert many times over - none of which are options at a live event... (yeah, right; DVD can never beat the real thing, but anyway...). This DVD features seventeen of this girl-trio's best hits, recorded live during their recent UK tour. More specifically, the recording was created at Belfast's Waterfront gig, and comes complete with spectacular lights, costume changes and dance routines. Experience Natasha, Lil and Jenny as they wow the crowd. Special features include rare behind the scenes footage in an exclusive 48 minute documentary, as well as two music videos. If you are an Atomic Kitten fan, then this is a must have for you! **(World Web Entertainment)**

P

# PRIEST AND SHRYKE ARE HAVING A DISCUSSION OVER A COUPLE OF BEERS...

**Priest:** And that's why Jellyfish don't have thumbs. *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** Oh. *(Sips beer)* But that doesn't mean that they couldn't manipulate things... *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** Yes, but you need fingers, else you're useless. *(Sips beer)* Fingers are the source of all manipulation!

**Shryke:** Not... uh-huh, not if you have the force... aha! *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** Hmmm *(Sips beer)*. But if you have fingers you know things with fingers and you can use the ring of power to manipulate those things with fingers. *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** See, like, if you gave a bunch of force-abled people the rings, and you have the, like *(Sips beer)* ring of power, you could control them *(Sips beer)* and stuff.

**Shryke:** So you're saying that the one ring is better than the force? Is that it? *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** No, no. I'm just saying that anyone with the one ring and an army of Jedi puppets can kick anyone else's butt. *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** True. But you'd never get the Jedi to wear the rings, so it's a bit of a moot point, isn't it? *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** I'd tell them that, uh, *(Sips beer)* Princess Leia digs it. Now if Luke, like the most powerful Jedi ever, would get busy with his own sister, I bet the other ones were just gunning for her.

**Shryke:** Have you actually seen Star Wars? Ever?

**Priest:** *(Sips beer)* And don't get me started on Natalie Portman. Like Anakin, the most powerful Jedi ever, wanted her so bad. I bet they'd trade their lightsabers for the ring. *(Sips beer)* With the right marketing, of course.

**Shryke:** *(looks at Priest for a long time)* I think someone has spiked your beer. *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** Even Yoda, who we all know is the most powerful Jedi ever, must have digged some chick somewhere. Gimme a few *(Sips beer)* days and he'll be saying stuff like, "Ring I have. Get laid I will." *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** Dude, never. He would use his Jedi force thingumajiggy to read your mind. He'd know you were full of it. *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** Are you telling me Yoda doesn't dig chicks? *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** Nah, man. Of course he does. I am sure there were a few possible Mrs Yodas out there. He's a swinger, no doubt. After all, he has a Jedi force thingumajiggy... But... *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** But *(Sips beer)* you would. *(Shryke nods in agreement.)* And besides, you never ever see Jellyfish getting laid. *(Sips beer)* You know why? Huh? Huh? *(Sips beer)* Er... *(Sips beer)* Because they don't have rings! I mean, when's the last time you saw a happy jellyfish?

**Shryke:** You're a ring. And besides, they don't have fingers, fool. *(Sips beer)*

**Priest:** Which is why they never get laid. Which is why Jellyfish never evolved the *(Sips beer)* uh, Force... so, er, *(Sips beer)* they can't open doors. *(Sips beer)* And that's why Jellyfish don't have thumbs.

**Shryke:** *(Sips beer)* Hey, dude, dude dude dude! Imagine if Hannibal Lecter had the ring. And the force!

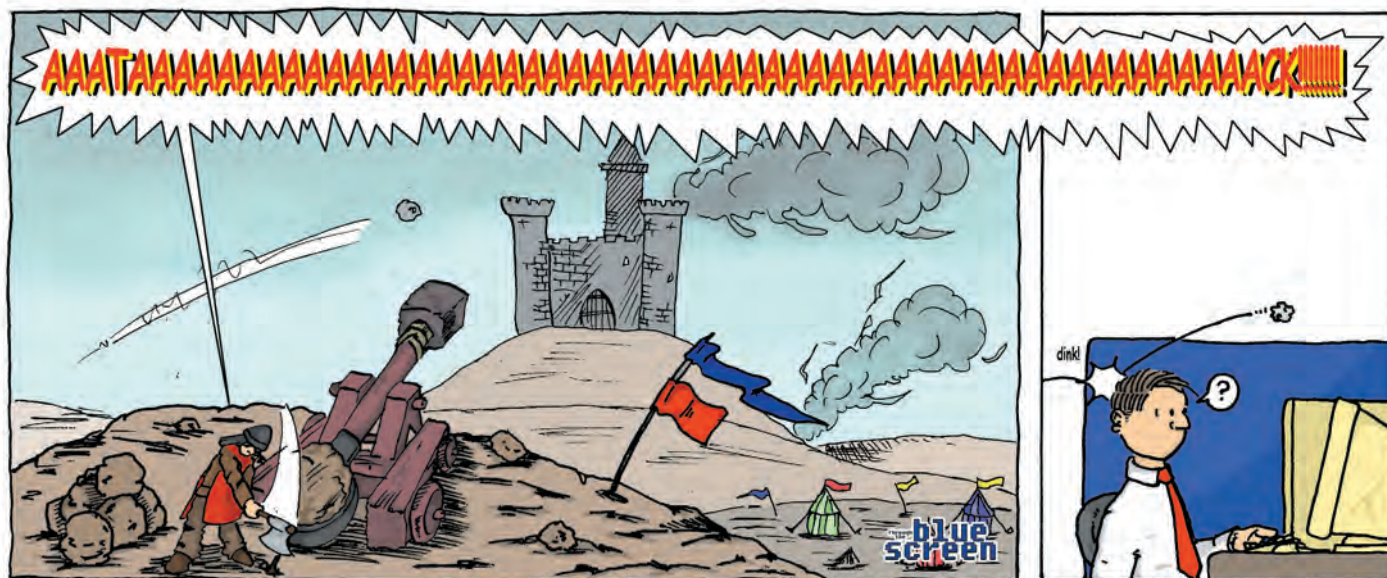
**Priest:** Damn, he'd get to eat both Jodi Foster AND Natalie Portman! *(Sips beer)*

**Shryke:** And that foxy Julianne Moore chick.

**Priest:** Damn, he would enjoy that ring.

**Shryke:** Ja, with some fava beans and a nice Chainte... *(Sips beer)*

Shryke passes out. Priest shows the waitress his ring.



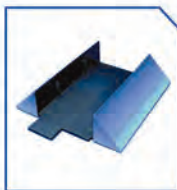


# Official PlayStation® Accessories

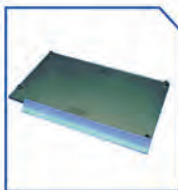


PS2 DVD REMOTE

PS2 VERTICAL STAND



PS2 HORIZONTAL STAND



DUALSHOCK® CONTROLLER



G-CON® GUN



MEMORY CARD



PS2 CARRY BAG



MULTI TAP



PSone LCD SCREEN

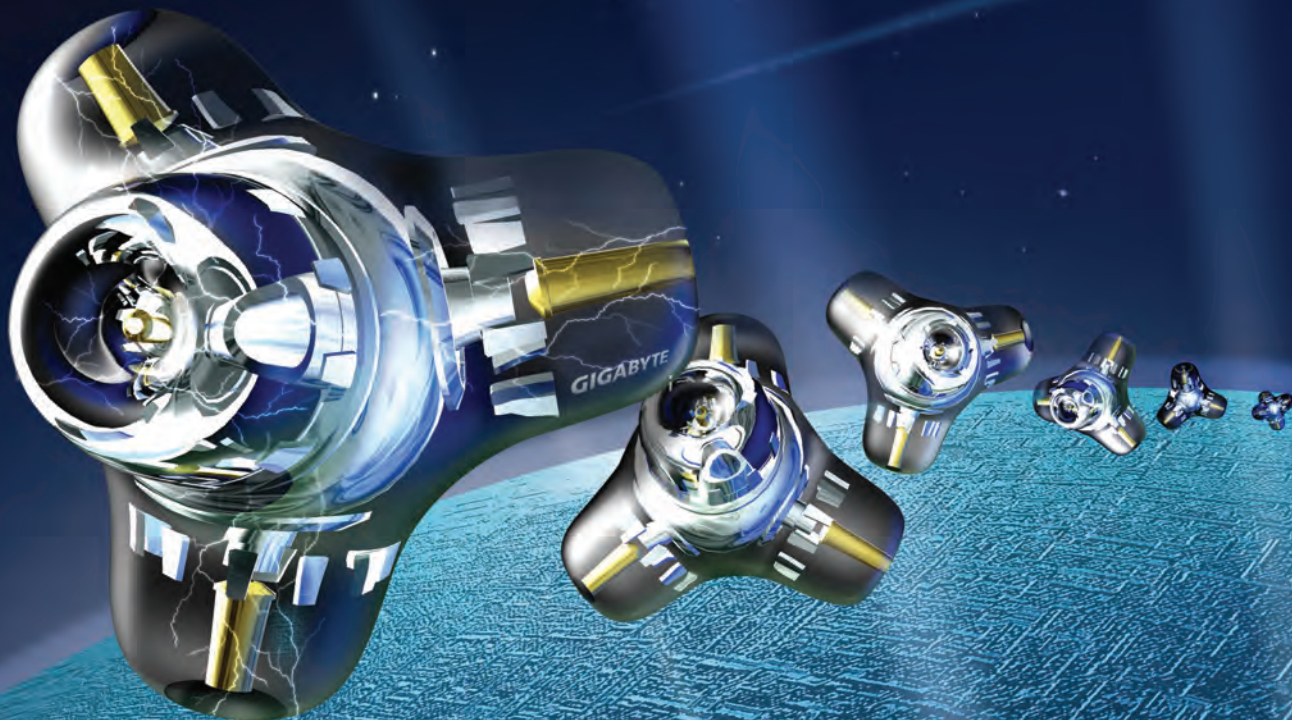


PSone Console



[www.playstation.co.za](http://www.playstation.co.za)





# Flying Over FSB 533

## GIGABYTE P4 Titan 667 Series Motherboard



### P4 Titan 667 series **DDR333+FSB533** **GA-8PE667 Ultra** Intel® 845PE Chipset

- Supports Intel® Pentium® 4 processor 3.06GHz and beyond
- Supports Hyper Threading Technology
- Enhance system performance with latest DDR memory support
- Provides 10 USB 2.0 ports for high-speed connectivity
- Promise IDE RAID 0, 1 function plus UDMA ATA 133 support
- Integrated Intel® PRO/100 VE Network Connection
- GIGABYTE patented DualBIOS™ technology design protects BIOS from virus attack
- Integrated high quality 6-channel AC'97 audio with S/P-DIF function
- Gigabyte unique EZ-Fix™ AGP 4x and memory DIMM slot with Anti-Burn™ design
- Round corner PCB plate design for better durability
- Rich in overclocking features via BIOS settings



ATA133 RAID USB 2.0 Intel® PRO DualBIOS™

6 Channels Audio Anti-Burn™ EasyTune™ 4



For more information, please call our distributors:



Johannesburg  
Tel: +27 11 2031000  
Fax: +27 11 2031100

Cape Town  
Tel: +27 21 5557111  
Fax: +27 21 5557117

Durban  
Tel: +27 31 5718888  
Fax: +27 31 5718886

Port Elizabeth  
Tel: +27 41 3638088  
Fax: +27 41 3631888

Bloemfontein  
Tel: +27 51 4300000  
Fax: +27 51 4601144

### P4 Titan 667 series **AGP8X+DDR400** **GA-8SG667** SiS 648/963 Chipset

- Supports socket 478 Intel® Pentium® 4 processor 3GHz or above
- Supports FSB 533/400 MHz
- Superb bandwidth AGP 8X graphic interface
- World leading DDR 400 memory support \*
- Provides 6 high speed USB 2.0 ports
- Supports Ultra ATA 133/100 IDE devices
- Integrated high quality 6-channel AC'97 audio



USB 2.0 6 Channels Audio ATA133

EasyTune™ 4 Q-Flash™ @BIOS™



"Best Price/Performance"  
PC Labs  
Nov. 2002, Turkey



AGP

FSB333

### **GA-7VAXP** VIA KT400/8235 Chipset

- Supports Advanced FSB 333MHz AMD Athlon® XP processor
- World leading DDR 400 memory supported for system performance enhancement\*
- Superb bandwidth AGP 8x interface for ultimate graphics performance
- Promise IDE RAID 0, 1 function plus UDMA ATA 133 support
- Integrated high quality 6-channel AC'97 audio with S/P-DIF function
- Provides 6 USB 2.0 ports for high-speed connectivity
- Provides 3 IEEE 1394 Firewire ports
- Integrated Ethernet 10/100Mb Network Connection
- GIGABYTE patented DualBIOS™ technology design protects BIOS from virus attack
- Provides CPU thermal detect and overheat protection
- Round corner PCB plate design for better durability
- Rich in overclocking features via BIOS settings
- Gigabyte unique EZ-Fix™ AGP slot



IEEE1394 ATA133 RAID USB 2.0 DualBIOS™

6 Channels Audio EasyTune™ 4 Q-Flash™



"Great Value"  
Financial Computer World  
Nov. 2002, UK

"1st Choice"  
Nov. 2002, Finland

"PC PRO"  
Nov. 2002, UK

"PC PRO"  
Nov. 2002, UK

\*DDR400 suggestion memory modules list please refer to Gigabyte website or user manual  
- These speed settings are not guaranteed by GIGABYTE.  
- The specifications and pictures are subject to change without notice.  
- All trademarks and logos are the properties of their respective holders.  
- Any overclocking is at user's risk. Giga-Byte Technology shall not be responsible for any damage or instability to your processor, motherboard, or any other components.

Upgrade Your Life™ [www.gigabyte.com.tw](http://www.gigabyte.com.tw)

**GIGABYTE™**  
TECHNOLOGY